



Life returns to Torkham after border reopens for trade

- Crossing opened for trucks, critical patients; pedestrian crossings to resume this week
- Pakistan, Afghan jirga members stress need to keep crossing open permanently
- Local traders believe Pakistan lost \$40.5m in possible profits due to extended closure

By Ibrahim Shirwari

KHAYBER: After ten days of hectic shuttle diplomacy spearheaded by tribal elders from both sides, the Torkham border reopened on Wednesday for trade and medical emergencies following an almost month-long closure due to a border dispute between Islamabad and Kabul.

The delegates from both sides met at zero point in the afternoon for a brief reopening ceremony, lasting about half an hour.

The meeting was followed by the stranded vehicles crossing over to both sides of the border.

Ambulances were also parked close to the crossing at the time of the opening ceremony in order to shift the seriously ill Afghan patients to Pakistan, while traffic police hustled to regulate the heavy traffic as frustrated transporters tried to overtake each other in their bids to cross the border before sunset.

Sources in the Pakistani delegation told Dawn that the Afghan representatives first came to the Pakistani side of the border, and later the Pakistani side also stepped on Afghan soil for a brief stay as a gesture of goodwill.

Yousaf Memon of the Afghan Chamber of Commerce and Industries and Shah Khalid Shumari, tribal chairman of Landi Kotal from the Pakistan side, made brief speeches in which they emphasised the need for keeping the border permanently open and resolving all border issues through consultations.

While thanking the security officials and the jirga members for their assisting efforts to resolve the issue, they also called for abiding by all the written and verbal agreements and commitments made by the officials and delegates during the last ten days while urging both sides to desist from any negative propaganda.

The jirga members then offered collective prayers and hugged each other while also sharing bouquets. Subsequently, one vehicle loaded with coal from Afghanistan entered Pakistan, while another loaded with cement crossed over into Afghanistan.

The border reopening ceremony was preceded by a Wednesday morning meeting between border security officials at Torkham, during which they

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Bid to divide nation will be foiled, president vows

- During visit to Quetta, Zardari discusses law and order with civilian, military leadership
- Asserts terrorists will be defeated, special camp office to be set up to address grievances

By Saleem Shahid

QUETTA: President Asif Ali Zardari on Wednesday pledged terrorist elements would be defeated at all costs and every attempt to divide the nation would fail.

Presiding over a meeting on law and order here, the president emphasised that the state's stance on terrorism is clear and that winning the war against terrorism is imperative.

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir

Sarfraz Bugti gave a comprehensive briefing on the security situation in the province. Prominent among those who attended the meeting were PPP Chairman Balochistan Shahnawaz Khan and acting Governor of Balochistan Abdul Khaliq Achakzai.

Addressing the meeting, President Zardari said Balochistan is close to his heart and its development and sustainable peace remain his top priority.

He expressed his desire to see

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PRESIDENT Asif Ali Zardari chairs a meeting on the law and order situation in Balochistan, on Wednesday. —AFP



KHAYBER: Pakistani and Afghan delegates offer thanksgiving prayers after they agreed to reopen the Torkham border, on Wednesday. —Photo by the writer

Judge questions IHC CJ's authority after Imran's plea transferred

- 'Continued interference' may weaken the system, Justice Ejaz warns
- Summons deputy registrar, advocate general for cancellation of cause list
- IHC acting chief justice set to hear all pleas relating to PTI founder today

By Malik Asad

ISLAMABAD: The consolidation of all petitions related to ex-PM Imran Khan's jail conditions apparently widened the gulf among the judges of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) as Justice Nardar Ujar Ishaq Khan on Wednesday raised critical questions about the transfer of a case pending before his court.

Justice Ishaq Khan, while hearing the petition of PTI lawyer Mahesh Anwar Yousaf, sought responses from the deputy registrar, judicial (DRJ) and advocate general for Islamabad regarding the cancellation of the cause list in a contempt petition.

The case pertains to authorities who failed to facilitate a meeting between Imran Khan and his legal team, despite court orders.

During the proceedings on Wednesday, Justice Ishaq Khan raised critical questions regarding the authority

of chief justice to transfer a case without the consent of the presiding judge. He remarked that judicial accountability ultimately lies with the public, adding that such actions erode confidence in the justice system.

"If the public sees that judges become helpless in cases involving powerful individuals, they will lose faith in the judiciary," he stated. "I am starting this process to address these fundamental questions."

The court summarised the DRJ and advocate general Islamabad under Sections 6B and 7 after the cancellation of the cause list for a contempt petition filed by lawyer Mahesh Yousaf against the jail superintendent.

'Acted upon orders'

When the hearing resumed, the deputy registrar informed the court that the cause list was cancelled on the instructions from the CJ's office, which had decided to form a larger

bench to hear the matter.

Justice Ishaq Khan questioned the legal basis for transferring the case without judicial consent and criticised the move as an attack on judicial independence. "Instead of cancelling the cause list, you might as well have demolished my courtroom," he remarked sternly.

The judge further questioned whether a chief justice had unilateral authority to reassign cases at will. "If a corrupt chief justice comes to power in the future, will they also have the ability to manipulate case allocations? Are we opening the doors to corruption and nepotism?" he asked.

The court directed the DRJ to submit a written response and sought clarification from the advocate general regarding the transfer of the case.

Justice Ishaq Khan emphasised that such actions could damage the credibility of judiciary. "If the state is determined to

engage in an ego battle, then there is no point in my presence here. Should I surrender my authority to the registrar's office? Will the office dictate which judge hears which case?" he questioned.

Expressing frustration over the incident, Justice Ishaq Khan declared that initiating contempt proceedings against the larger bench's decision to cancel the case listing was necessary to uphold judicial independence.

"The real accountability of judges lies with the public," he reiterated, warning that continued interference in judicial matters could weaken the justice system.

Larger bench

A day earlier, the IHC had constituted a larger bench to hear all petitions related to the visitation rights and prison conditions of Imran Khan, currently

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Depriving women of their inheritance is 'un-Islamic', Shariat Court rules

Govt asked to initiate criminal cases against perpetrators of such actions under Section 498-A of penal code

By Nasir Iqbal

ISLAMABAD: In a landmark ruling, the Federal Shariat Court (FSC) on Wednesday declared all acts of depriving women of their inheritance rights as un-Islamic and illegal, having no legal force, subject to criminal actions to punishment.

In her petition, Syeda Farhat Jaleel

Shah not only highlighted the practices prevailing in Ramra, but also sought

Justice Dr Syed Muhammad Anwar of the four-member bench that also comprised Chief Justice Iqbal Hussain Khan, Justice Khairul Hossain M. Sheikh and Justice Anwar Muhammad Khan, came on a petition moved against the customs of 'Chhabhar' or 'Parcha' prevalent in parts of Ramra district — that either deprived women of inheritance right granted by the Holy Quran and Sunnah, or forced them to accept a share of less value than their inheritance through jirgas.

The Shariat Court declared the practice un-Islamic and illegal, having no legal force, subject to criminal actions to punishment.

In her petition, Syeda Farhat Jaleel Shah not only highlighted the practices prevailing in Ramra, but also sought

relief for her mother, Syeda Farhat Bibi, who was allegedly deprived of a share in her father's and husband's inheritance due to the local custom.

The FSC, however, partially accepted the plea whereby the petitioner was seeking relief to declare the local custom as un-Islamic. As such, actions by the relevant authorities of the state falls within the scope of "Amr bil Maruf Wa Nahi Anil Munkar," which is an important duty of the State under the Act N of 1991 (Enforcement of Shariah Act, 1991).

The petitioner also relied upon Verses 7, 11, 12 and 34 of Surah Nisa, wherein the issue of inheritance of women has been discussed and

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Policy for uniform standards of 'green projects' round the corner

'National Green Taxonomy' will set criteria to determine sustainable initiatives eligible for funding

By Abdul Moiz Malik

KARACHI: Pakistan is set to launch its set of guidelines that would define the standards to classify sustainable economic activities based on their impact on climate adaptation and mitigation goals and fund them.

A meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, held at the State Bank on Wednesday, was told that a draft of the 'National Green Taxonomy' would be launched by next month.

The European Union, one of the few regions in the world to have a taxonomy, explains it as a classification system that "defines criteria for economic activities" that are aligned with national goals of cutting carbon emissions and other environmental goals.

Simply put, it will be a checklist of requirements that a company must meet to secure climate funding. For example, a steel manufacturer will have to curb emissions from factories, prove ethical sourcing of raw material and have a plan to produce metal from recycled steel to qualify as a sustainable economic activity with minimal impact on climate.

While briefing the committee, State Bank (SBP) Governor Jamil Ahmad said the taxonomy will allow financial and non-financial companies to share a common definition of economic activities that can be considered environmentally sustainable. He said much work on the project

has been completed with technical assistance from the World Bank. It will be finalised within the next four months.

SBP Deputy Governor Saleemullah said the taxonomy would increase investment in green activity and facilitate transparency in the financial sector.

It will help regulators, financial institutions, investors and the government make "informed decisions" on funding and scaling sustainable economic activities.

The meeting was informed that Pakistan will be only the third country after Bangladesh and Sri Lanka to have a national taxonomy.

The final draft of the guidelines will be available by the first week of April, Mr Saleemullah said.

Last month, an initial draft was published on the website of the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination and SBP for feedback from stakeholders

and the public.

While explaining the classification of sectors and economic activities in the taxonomy, Mr Saleemullah said the assessment would be done based on the sector's contribution to the GDP, its greenhouse gas emissions and its resilience to meet the national mitigation and adaptation goals.

Based on these benchmarks, the priority sectors identified in the taxonomy are agriculture, manufacturing, transport, energy, construction, water and waste, IT, and tourism.

Senator Sherry Rehman, the chairperson of the Senate committee, suggested the involvement of provinces and local governments as the policy would require "structural changes" in the economic sector, which can't be implemented without the support of provincial governments.

She recommended presenting the taxonomy before the Council of Common Interests, which includes

chief ministers of all the four provinces.

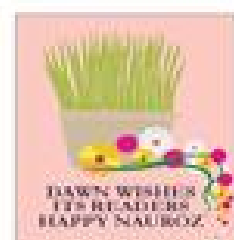
Ms Rehman, who has previously served as the federal minister for climate change, stressed clearly defined adaptation plans by businesses to secure green funding.

Dr Zargha Shaukatwar, Fastrail, a committee member, urged the government to take ownership of the taxonomy for its effective implementation.

Nasir Qureshi, Minister asked the SBP governor to focus on communications, especially with farmers in their regional languages, to ensure they are aligned with national priorities on climate change.

The meeting was also attended by the representatives of the Overseas Business Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Pakistan Business Council and private sector.

They said the taxonomy must target small and medium enterprises and the informal sector to have a true green impact.



World Bank approves \$102m for microfinance

By Amin Ahmed

ISLAMABAD: The World Bank has approved \$102 million in financing for a project aimed at expanding access to microcredit and strengthening the resilience of Pakistan's microfinance sector, particularly against climate-related shocks.

The funding for the Resilient and Accessible Microfinance (RAM) project was approved by the World Bank's board of directors on Tuesday, according to a statement issued by the bank's Resident Mission in Islamabad.

"Microfinance is a critical tool for supporting the livelihoods of vulnerable populations in Pakistan," said Naji Berhanou, World Bank Country Director for Pakistan. "This project will help strengthen the resilience of the microfinance sector, particularly in the face of growing climate risks, ensuring that the sector can continue to provide essential financial services to those who need them most, especially in rural areas."

The project is part of the bank's broader commitment to promoting financial inclusion in Pakistan and increasing resilience

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ON OTHER PAGES



JUI-F leader Hafiz Hussain passes away

Senior leader of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fatwa, veteran politician and Islamic scholar Hafiz Hussain Ahmad passed away late on Wednesday night, his family confirmed. He was 74. His funeral prayers will be held at his residence, followed by his burial in Quetta. Mr Ahmad had been suffering from kidney disease and was on dialysis for a long time, due to which he had largely withdrawn from active politics in recent years. Page 3



Eid holidays to start from March 31

The federal government has declared five public holidays for Eid-ul-Fitr from March 31 to April 2. However, the sighting of the moon will determine the date for Eid-ul-Fitr celebrations across the country. The Central Fiscal Policy Committee, along with Zonal committees, will convene on the evening of March 30 (Sunday) to sight the Shawal moon. The Ministry had earlier predicted Eid will fall on March 31. Page 5

LHC removes blasphemy convict's appeal from hearing schedule

LAHORE: The hearing of an appeal against the death sentence of former university lecturer Junaid Hafeez could not take place on Wednesday as the case was removed from the cause list of a two-judge bench of the Lahore High Court (LHC).

According to the cause list issued on Saturday for the ongoing week, the appeal was scheduled to be heard on March 19 by a division bench comprising Justice Shafiqur Rehman Chaudhry and Justice Saeed Akhtar Ali.

The appeal was listed as the last case on the "red cause list" of regular cases before the bench, which contained a total of eight cases. The LHC introduced red cause lists in 2015 to prioritize the disposal of old cases.

However, two days before the hearing, the appellant's counsel was informed by the LHC office via text message that the case had been rescheduled.

The updated cause list, published on the LHC website and mobile application, showed that only the last case had been removed from the bench's schedule.

Hafeez — a former visiting lecturer at the Bahauddin Zakariya University (BZU) — was arrested by police on March 13, 2013, and his trial started in 2014.

He was sentenced to death by a Mutamaddat and sessions court on Dec 21, 2010, on blasphemy charges. His appeal against the sentence has been pending since 2020. — Staff Reporter

Work on Akbari Mandi's restoration begins

LAHORE: The restoration of the historic Akbari Spice Market has begun.

The project includes the reconstruction of the ancient Akbari Gate and improvements to the market's infrastructure. The Walled City of Lahore Authority (WCLA) is overseeing its implementation, said Senior Minister Maryam Aurangzeb.

"This project aims at preserving Lahore's historical heritage and serves as a major milestone in boosting the economy and tourism. Shop signboards and spice racks will be redesigned, while walkways for pedestrians will remain open, with enhanced accessibility facilities," the minister said.

WCLA Director General Kamran Lashari said the reconstruction of the ancient Akbari Gate will help revive its historical significance.

Solar lights will be installed to provide an eco-friendly lighting system in the old city. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz is personally overseeing this project to modernize Lahore's cultural and commercial hub, ensuring better facilities for citizens," he said.

The project will be completed at a cost of Rs990.51 million. — Staff Reporter

4,000 offloaded at Lahore airport since Jan

LAHORE: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has offloaded over 4,000 passengers at the Lahore airport because of fake, suspicious or incomplete travel record since this January.

According to the FIA, 14 passengers have been arrested for using fraudulent documents. Some 275 passengers involved in beggary have also been apprehended.

The arrested ones were handed over to the Anti-Human Trafficking Circle Lahore for further investigation. — Staff Reporter



LAHORE: Women buy artificial jewellery inside Doha Gate. — White Star

Corruption, inefficiency hallmarks of Maryam's one-year rule: PTI report

Party claims credit for almost all the initiatives of Punjab govt

By Mansoor Malik

LAHORE: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's Punjab parliamentary party on Wednesday launched a report on Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's one-year in power, alleging the period was replete with corruption, inefficiency and copying of the PTI government's projects.

The report, in a book form, presented by Opposition Leader in Punjab Assembly Malik Ahmad Khan Bhachar at an after-dinner on Wednesday, claims "with facts and figures" that the Maryam government copied several projects launched during PTI rule. "The PTI Punjab parliamentary party has prepared this report after intensive research and can hold a debate on its authenticity with the Punjab government," Mr Bhachar asserted.

Contending Punjab government's claim that it launched the journalist Housing Scheme Phase-II and was paying Rs40 million to the Ravi Urban Development Authority (RUDA) for 3,200 residential plots, the opposition leader stated that this project was approved and launched by the PTI government on Dec 10, 2022, allocating 700 kanal land for the purpose.

He stated that the Maryam government boasts of enacting the Punjab Defamation Act 2024, without realising that the whole journalists' community called it a black law and protested against it. He said the opposition in the Punjab Assembly submitted 23 amendments to the law, but none of them was considered.

He said the Maryam government claimed to increase Lahore's Free City grant from Rs10 million to Rs50m, saying the PTI government had increased the city's grant from Rs5m to Rs20m in July 2019.

Mr Bhachar said the PTI government claimed to have launched the Chief Minister Kisan Card and giving interest-free loans to farmers. He rejected the claim, saying that the scheme for farmers was launched by PM Imran Khan in April 2021, and pointed out "anomalies" in the project.

He also criticised the Punjab government's claim of launching the CM's Green Tractor programme in the agriculture sector, saying the scheme was launched by his party in January 2019.

About the Punjab government's Rs15 billion Housing Scheme Phase-II and was paying Rs40 million to the Ravi Urban Development Authority (RUDA) for 3,200 residential plots, the opposition leader stated that this project was approved and launched by the PTI government on Dec 10, 2022, allocating 700 kanal land for the purpose.

Undergraduate Scholarship programme and disbursed Rs50,000 scholarships to 200,000 students.

Quantifying CM Maryam's claim of launching a free medicines project for cancer and heart patients, Mr Bhachar said the PTI government under its National Sehat Card provided free medicines to the entire population of Punjab.

The opposition leader also criticised PTI-N government's CM dialysis programme, Health Clinic scheme, Air Ambulance service, expanding Borealis 1122 service and Agni Chhat Agni Ghar scheme, claiming that the Maryam government had only copied the PTI projects "already launched in Punjab".

Trashing the government's claim of constructing 10 underground water storage tanks in Lahore, the PTI leader said his party had launched the project and constructed three such tanks, one each at Lawrence Garden, Alhamra and Aik Mariya Puli. He said the paperwork was also complete for the Gaddafi Stadium tank, meant to drain water and divert it to the city canal. However, he said, the caretaker government stopped funds for the scheme in April 2023.

Mr Bhachar also refuted Maryam government's claim of introducing programmes like eco-friendly buses, new mass transit system and Humus Card, saying these were originally PTI's projects.

The opposition leader said the PTI-N government promised to launch

Socioeconomic Registry at a cost of Rs9 billion, claiming that the PTI government in its three-year tenure had collected data of some 34.8 million families through door-to-door surveys.

He also claimed that the Livestock Card, Plant For Pakistan, Punjab Special Planning Authority, Shrimp Farming, CM Aamir Karam Card and Mandu Card projects were originally launched by the PTI government and were merely copied by the PTI-N.

Bhachar accused the Maryam government for low budget utilisation for the announced projects, citing budgets for higher education, National University in Murree, CM Rashid Gharaana Programme, tube-wells' solarisation, agriculture, road infrastructure, CM skills programme, Garments City scheme, playgrounds in all provincial constituencies, youth affairs and sports, free WiFi, 40,000 laptops, school for autistic children, school meal programme and Nawaz Sharif Cancer Hospital.

He also questioned the use of public resources for the publicity of the Sharif family. CM's new camp offices, besides non-utilisation of health, environment protection and women development departments' budgets.

The PTI's report also castigates the government for poor law and order, human rights violations, increase in poverty, corruption and terrorism and weakening of democracy.

PTI sows divisions on national security issues: Marriyum

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Punjab Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Wednesday the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) always creates divisions on matters of national security and failed to demonstrate unity in the "war against terrorism".

"The PTI kidnapped the National Security Parliamentary Committee meeting despite the fact that national security is not an issue of a single party but the entire nation," Ms Aurangzeb told a presser here.

Criticising PTI supreme leader Imran Khan, she said that during the party's tenure in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa he failed to form

ulate an effective counter-terrorism strategy and instead used every terrorism incident for political mileage.

Since the PTI decided against attending the high-level security huddle, many PTI-N leaders have been looking out at the party for its "autocratic" decision.

The senior minister said KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur lacked independent decision-making power. "That is why a provincial security plan has yet to be formulated despite the KP being the province most affected by terrorism."

Ms Aurangzeb reaffirmed that the current government was taking all necessary steps to eliminate terrorism and that all provinces must implement strict

measures in accordance with the national security policy.

She recalled that the PTI-N government played a leading role in the fight against terrorism from 2013 to 2018 and once again the Sharif Sharif government and military leadership would take a firm stand against terrorism.

She underscored that terrorists had no religion or ideology. "They (militants) are simply enemies of the state and must be dealt with firmly."

The minister said the PTI had been disengaging itself from national issues and relying on "false narratives to mislead the public". "These individuals [the PTI leaders] incite incidents like May 9, spread propaganda

against security forces, but when it comes to national security and development, they always retreat."

She added that whenever a terrorist attack occurs in the country, the PTI shifts the blame onto the governments, while failing to build any infrastructure to combat terrorism in the KP.

Ms Aurangzeb urged the public to support the government and security forces in the fight against terrorism. "Pakistan's security is our collective responsibility, and every citizen must play their role in preserving it."

She also called upon the media to act responsibly, as it did in 2014, and to expose elements that strengthen terrorist narratives.

Five die, 12 injured in bus-van collision

CHINIOT: Five people were killed and 12 others injured as a result of a collision between a bus and a passenger van near Buz Shad Lalian town.

Reports said the bus was carrying sugar mill employees to their homes after their shift when it collided head-on with a van travelling from Sargodha to Islamabad. As a result five van passengers were killed on the spot, while 12 others sustained severe injuries.

Rescue 1122 ambulances shifted the injured to Lalian THQ Hospital and Chiniot DHQ Hospital. Some victims were in a critical condition, prompting authorities to declare an emergency in both hospitals and call in additional medical staff. — Correspondent



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Two children in Chilas die after eating tainted food at Iftar

By Jamil Naqvi

GILGIT: Two children of a family were killed while six others were hospitalised after consuming contaminated food during Iftar on Monday in Gilgit Baltistan's Chilas, officials said on Tuesday.

Rescue 1122 reported that all family members in the Thark area of Chilas tainted after having an Iftar meal.

A rescue official said that all eight family members were taken to the Chilas regional headquarters hospital in an unconscious state, where 10-year-old Imtiaz Ali died on Monday night and his three-year-old sister Aida Bibi passed away on Tuesday morning.

"The others are still being treated," he said.

Initially, a spokesperson for the District administration said it was unclear what was mixed in the food which the family ate.

However, local police later alleged that the Chilas resident, identified as Gulab Shah, whose family was poisoned had two wives living under the same roof.

Mr Shah's second wife, who left with her only child for her parents' home just before the others had the meal may have mixed the poison in the Iftar meal.

The six hospitalised family members were identified as Gulab Shah, Nake, Gul Sherin, Nahida, six-year-old Nazia and three-year-old Nake.

The police also said Shah had six children from his first wife and one from his second.

Police sources said an investigation is underway and the facts would be unveiled after an investigation.

HEC to get land in sector I-17 for construction of universities

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) has decided to provide land to Higher Education Commission (HEC) for construction of two universities in sector I-17.

Earlier, in 2007, CDA had provided 250 acres to HEC in Kari area, but due to adverse possession issue, the CDA did not hand over possession of the land to HEC.

Recently, the CDA in collaboration with Defense Housing Authority (DHA) has launched Margalla Enclave Housing Project in I-17. While, CDA board decided that all government educational institutions, which were earlier allotted land in Kari area, will be provided alternative land in I-17.

"The plots designated for universities and educational institutions have been relocated to the Institutional Sector (I-17) following approval from the CDA Board and the federal government. This sector has been specifically earmarked for the development of universities and institutions," a CDA official told Dawn.

In a brief statement, the civic agency further stated, "In parallel, for the housing sector at Kori Model Village, the CDA and the DHA have launched the Margalla Enclave project, also approved by the CDA Board and the federal government."

On the other hand, sources in the HEC said that back in 2007, HEC procured 250 acres from CDA for establishment of University of Engineering, Sciences and Technology.

Later on, the HEC out of allotted 250-acre, earmarked 55 acres for National University of Law. Later on despite efforts made by CDA and HEC, the possession of land could not be secured as locals were residing on HEC's allotted land. Sources said that HEC is now looking for its allotted land or for alternative land. "Soon we will hold meeting with CDA in this regard," said an official of the HEC.

However, CDA officials on Wednesday told Dawn that HEC would be provided land in sector I-17. "We will provide alternative land to HEC in sector I-17, as we did in case of Federal Investigation Agency and some other government organisations," he said.

Sources in HEC said that besides said university land, the HEC had also several plots worth millions of rupees in various markets of Islamabad including G-11 and I-8, which are lying unused. — Kashif Abbasi



LIGHTNING strikes over Islamabad as the city received rain on Wednesday evening. The light showers turn the weather pleasant. — Online

CDA to dole out subsidised plots to employees, court told

IHC allows civic body to commence process of allotment to petitioners

By Malik Asad

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has decided to dole out as many as 6,500 plots to its employees at subsidised rates, its counsel informed the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday.

CDA's counsel Naazir Jamil shared the details before Justice Raja Imran Ameen Mirza during the hearing of identical petitions lodged by a number of CDA employees seeking allotment of plots at subsidised rates.

CDA's counsel Naazir Jamil informed the court about the decision of the civic agency's board taken recently.

He stated, "The CDA is ready to allot plots to the petitioners in underdeveloped sectors, i.e. C-13, D-13, C-14, C-15, I-16, I-14, I-12, Park Enclave and Kori Model Village, subject to acceptance of the offer by CBA [collective bargaining agent] and others."

The CDA's union, on the other hand, promptly accepted the offer and the judge directed the civic agency "to commence the process of allotment of plots to the petitioners and CBA".

Interestingly, the members of the CDA Board of Directors are also beneficiaries and at present all of them are working on deputation and they may get bigger plots while other employees will be allotted comparatively small plots.

The CDA is governed by a board which consists of a chairman and various members. Of the more than 120 members that have served in the CDA since the agency's inception, hardly 20 were regular CDA employees. It is said that only one regular CDA officer, Shahid Siddiqui, has ever become the chairman of the civic agency in all these years.

CDA's counsel Jamil, when contacted, said the court order would be applicable to all the CDA's employees, including the members of its board.

According to some lawyers, the CDA stance seems not only contradictory to the government's austerity drive but also negates the judgements of the superior courts, including one authored by Justice Mian Muhammad Aslam Khan in 2023.

As per a recent section, the CDA val-

ued a plot measuring one kanal in Sector E-14 around Rs60 million. The allotment involved 6,500 plots are of different categories, ranging from 5 mas to a kanal. According to an estimate these plots are likely worth over Rs1 trillion.

In 2023, the IHC ruled that allotment of plots to the CDA employees and selected categories on subsidised rates was contradictory to the constitutional provisions and directed the cash-strapped federal government to ensure the disposal of state land at competitive prices.

IHC Justice Mian Muhammad Aslam Khan, on a petition of a CDA employee Muhammad Iqbal seeking a subsidised plot in Sector D-12 had observed that "any criteria made by the CDA board which is not designed to achieve the best possible price for the plots in other sectors would be prima facie repugnant to Article 173 of the Constitution that empowered the government to acquire land as well as the law laid down by the superior courts."

Section 49 of the Capital Development Authority Ordinance 1960 provides that the CDA may retain, or may lease, sell, exchange, rent or otherwise dispose of any land vested in it.

It is implied in the said provision that the sale or disposal of CDA's land which can be at the best possible rates which can only be realised through an auction or a competitive bidding process.

To dispose of land at a rate even slightly lower than the market rate that can be realised for it in a transparent auction or a competitive bidding process would be prima facie not just irrational but detrimental to the state, the court observed.

The court order states, "Allotment of a plot worth millions of rupees is not part of the terms and conditions of service of any of the categories of employees/public functionaries mentioned in Regulation 5(1) of the 2005(CDA) Regulations. To provide them with a windfall in the form of the allotment of a plot at a rate which is not commensurate to the rate that can be realised for it in an open auction is a strain on the national exchequer..."

In 2011, IHC Justice Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui ruled that those working on deputation in the CDA were not entitled to subsidised plots.

Later on, Justice Athar Minal Hakeem ruled against the distribution of plots at throw-away prices to the regular employees of the civic agency.

Expert asks WhatsApp users to beware of cybercriminals

By Iram Jureidi

ISLAMABAD: While WhatsApp accounts are being hacked and stolen, and stolen accounts are used for various criminal activities, ranging from spam distribution to sophisticated financial frauds, technology expert Hafeez Aris has suggested that the masses be careful.

"There are two ways cybercriminals can gain control of a WhatsApp account. They can add another device to an existing account using the 'linked devices' feature, or they can re-register the account on their own device as if the user had bought a new phone. In the first case, the user continues to use WhatsApp as usual, but the criminals also have access to all recent conversations. In the second case, the user loses access to their personal account. When trying to log in, WhatsApp notifies him that the account is already in use on another device, and the attackers can then control the account but not the past conversations," Mr Aris, who is associated with cyber security company Kaspersky, said.

"Instant messengers often contain both personal information about our lives and relationships, and details about work including, in some cases, confidential information. If you notice any unusual activity, such as receiving replies to messages that you didn't send, or if your friends complain about strange messages coming from your account, it's important to take steps to protect your privacy immediately. These steps can include logging out on all other devices except your phone, as well as informing your friends and family - in a call, an update of your WhatsApp status, or on social networks - warning not to trust messages from the hacked account and not to send money," said Hafeez Aris.

"You can check instructions on what to do in case WhatsApp account was already compromised, while to avoid WhatsApp account from being hacked, user should enable two-step verification in WhatsApp and memorise your PIN, which is not a one-time code. To do this, go to Settings > Account > Two-step verification. Never, ever share your PIN or one-

time registration codes with anyone. Only scammers ask for these details. WhatsApp recently introduced support for passkeys. If you enable this option (Settings > Account > Passkeys), logging in to your account will require biometric authentication, and instead of PIN codes, your smartphone will store a long cryptographic key. This is a very secure option, but it may not be convenient if you frequently change devices and switch between Android and iOS," he said.

"Make sure your device is locked with a PIN or password. If you are a victim of a SIM swap scam, contact your mobile carrier - preferably in person - and verify that no duplicate SIM cards have recently been issued for your number. Also, make sure there's no unauthorised call forwarding set up on your number. Cancel any suspicious changes and ask the staff about additional security measures for your SIM card. Any security measures in WhatsApp will be of little use if your smartphone or computer is infected with malware. Therefore, be sure to install comprehensive protection on all your devices," Hafeez Aris said.

Parliamentarians discuss gender-responsive budgeting

ISLAMABAD: The Women's Parliamentary Caucus of the National Assembly, on Wednesday hosted a session on Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) at the Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Services (PIPS).

Held under Secretary Dr Shahida Rehmani, the session focused on formulating a strategic approach to integrate gender-sensitive measures into public service and policy implementation, aligning Pakistan's efforts with international commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Titled "Federal Budget FY2025-26: Promoting Gender-Responsive Budgeting," the session was moderated by constitutional expert Zafarullah Khan and organised in collaboration with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, said a press release issued here.

In her opening remarks, Dr Shahida Rehmani underscored WPC's commitment to gender-inclusive policy reforms and highlighted the Gender Responsive Budgeting Strategy 2023, which outlined a framework for integrating gender considerations into national budgets.

MNA Bariyeh Asim Malik, provided an update on the Gender Mainstreaming Committee, now chaired by MNA Dr Nafisa Shah. He detailed the committee's collaboration with government departments to incorporate GRB into policies and

its ongoing analysis of gender-related budget data to ensure equitable allocation of funds in the upcoming Federal Budget FY2025-26. He also advocated for equal development funds for MNAs holding reserved seats.

The session brought together parliamentarians, representatives from the Omar Asghar Khan Foundation, civil society members, and academics. MNA Komal Mal Khattar Das highlighted the multifaceted roles of women in society, acknowledging their contributions as homemakers, professionals, politicians, and public representatives.

Speakers emphasised the role of parliamentarians in promoting gender-responsive budgeting. President of the Young Parliamentarians Forum (YFP), shed light on challenges faced by women in her constituency, including lack of representation among female voters, absence of leadership rights for divorced women, economic dependence, and limited access to healthcare and education.

MNA Dr Nafisa Shah emphasised the Gender Mainstreaming Committee's efforts in promoting gender-responsive budgeting. She noted that formal recommendations had been sent to the finance ministry and planning and development ministry, urging the inclusion of gender-focused budgetary allocations in the FY2025-26 federal budget. She also voiced concerns over disparities in constituency development funds and called for intervention at the Prime Minister's office to address the issue. — Staff Reporter

Minister tells Pims staff to treat patients with kindness

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Health Syed Mustafa Kamal on his first visit to Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) on Wednesday urged doctors, paramedical staff and nurses to treat patients with kindness and professionalism.

"Patients come to hospitals to get best possible treatment for their loved ones and hope to return happily with the recovered relations. A few kind words can be a source of healing for patients and their attendants," he said.

"We must ensure the provision of

quality healthcare and do everything in our power to improve hospital services," he said.

During the visit, the hospital administration provided a detailed briefing to the minister. He was informed about the medical facilities available, the resources at hand, and the challenges faced by the hospital in delivering quality healthcare. Furthermore, the minister was updated on ongoing projects and the upgradation initiatives at PIMS.

It was informed that PIMS receives approximately 6,000 to 7,000 patients daily. The minister was also briefed on the construction of a new 200-bed emergency facil-



HEALTH Minister Mustafa Kamal talks to the hospital staff during his visit to PIMS in Islamabad on Wednesday. — White Star

ity, which is expected to become functional by June.

Mustafa Kamal inquired about the various tests being conducted in the hospital's laboratories. He instructed hospital authorities to submit a comprehensive report on the challenges, recommendations and future plans for improvement at the earliest.

Following the briefing, the minister inspected the Outpatient Department (OPD) and emergency wards. He personally reviewed the facilities being provided to patients and interacted with them to understand their concerns.

He emphasised the importance of compassionate healthcare. "God

loves His creation, and humans have been made the best of all creations. Those who come to hospitals are in distress, and we must work to ease their suffering, not add to it," he remarked.

He further stated, "People in pain are close to God. It is our duty to serve them with sincerity and dedication. These positions of authority are a trust from God, and we must fulfil our responsibilities with integrity."

Minister Mustafa Kamal reaffirmed the government's commitment to strengthening healthcare infrastructure and ensuring the delivery of efficient medical services to the public.



Victim complex

INDIAN Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent comments to an American podcaster regarding the Pakistan-India relationship are detached from reality and reflect a highly selective reading of the history of the nearly eight-decade-old dispute. While the relationship has been marked by great complexity, with mostly lows and a few highs since partition, Mr Modi painted Pakistan as the villain of the piece, with India the innocent victim of Islamabad's conniving schemes. The reality is quite different. Mistakes have been made by both sides, but in the recent past it has been India that has been resisting Pakistan's overtures for peace. As the Foreign Office put it, the Indian PM's remarks were "misleading and one-sided".

Mr Modi seemed "hurt" that Pakistan had engaged in a "proxy war" against his country, and that Islamabad replied to his personal attempts to mend fences with "hostility". Interestingly, while the podcaster appeared to be nothing more than an attempt at Pakistan-bashing and reimagining history, the Indian leader offered no way towards peace. It is clear, therefore, that it is not Pakistan but India that is not interested in harmony in South Asia. This country has been advocating dialogue, while India refuses to even play cricket in Pakistan, as the recent debacle over the Champions Trophy illustrated. Pakistan indeed has its flaws, and mistakes have been made by the state in the past, such as letting certain groups indulge in cross-border adventurism. But times have changed, and these are matters of the past. Moreover, it should be remembered that India has also encouraged cross-border terrorism in Pakistan, particularly targeting Balochistan through its malign activities. And Pakistan is not alone; the Indian security apparatus has spread its tentacles to the West, deploying assassins in Canada and the US to target Sikh activists. Therefore, Indian foreign policy, particularly under the BJP's watch, is not exactly guided by ahimsa, but by active meddling in the affairs of sovereign states. Mr Modi should also have recalled the role of his own intelligence operatives in destabilising Pakistan while blaming this country for not playing nice.

The truth is that from sabotaging Sagar and trying to isolate Pakistan diplomatically to constantly raising the bogey of cross-border terrorism, it is India that has rebuffed Pakistan's efforts to make peace. Instead of criticising Pakistan publicly, India needs to revisit its own negative approach. If New Delhi is sincere about bringing peace to South Asia, let it agree to an unconditional dialogue with Islamabad about all irritants. If India has complaints against Pakistan, this country also has a long list of grievances against its eastern neighbour. The only way to bring lasting peace is to launch uninterrupted and uninterrupted dialogue to address all issues. Is India ready?

LSM decline

THE slump in large-scale manufacturing amidst the adjustments the economy is forced to make in order to stay afloat comes as no surprise. With economic growth rates having nearly bottomed in recent years, big industry output has grown negatively since July 2022, barring a few months of a slight uptick in LSM output. Although economic activity has gained some traction as underlined by high-frequency indicators, including the sale of automobiles, PPI, products and cement, as well as import volumes and credit to the private sector, the real sector remains under stress. Multiple factors — the high cost of credit, heavy taxation, a steep surge in domestic power and gas prices, dollar liquidity crunch leading to unspoken curbs on imports, declining cotton production, etc — are dragging down LSM growth. Further, the use of fertilisers is decreasing and people are spending less on food and beverages. Likewise, the construction industry slowdown has had a harsh impact on iron and steel output. That said, certain sectors like textiles and cement have shown a slight uptick due to a modest rise in exports, and automobiles sales are recovering on a low base effect.

Overall, big industry recorded a negative growth of 1.78pc during the first seven months of the current fiscal year from a year ago. In FY24, LSM had contracted 0.93pc compared to a 0.92pc growth in the preceding year. No doubt there is reason to be worried about the country's declining LSM output. However, we cannot expect big industry to grow when the entire economy is in slow mode, despite the reduced volatility that has created a semblance of stability and slight recovery, supported by IMF funding, over the last one and a half years. Inflation is down but significant risks remain: the current account is in surplus because of a record increase in remittances, but pressures on the external account are re-emerging due to rising imports and weakening foreign private and official capital flows. The recent recovery notwithstanding, Pakistan's economy lacks the strength to walk let alone run. Any push to accelerate industrial growth at the moment would land us into deeper trouble. The only way forward is to shed our old habits of achieving growth through imported consumption, while sticking to a slow-growth mode until the pro-growth reforms agenda is implemented to remove structural issues that are pulling down the industry.

Education interrupted

THE sudden closure of major universities in Balochistan, ostensibly due to 'security concerns', marks another blow to a student population already living under the shadow of apathy and marginalisation. At the time of writing, the University of Balochistan, Sardar Bahadur Khan Women University, and University of Turbat had suspended on-campus activities indefinitely, leaving thousands of students in academic limbo. The proposed solution — online classes — would be laughable if it were not so tragically disconnected from the reality of Balochistan. In a province where reliable internet access is a luxury rather than a basic utility, how can students participate in online education? The casual assurance that students from areas with connectivity problems will receive 'concessions' fails to address the basic inequity.

These closures follow a disturbing pattern of state indifference towards students. For years, we have witnessed Baloch students from campuses across Pakistan being 'disappeared', their education and lives disrupted under the guise of national security. Now, even within their home province, their right to education faces further erosion. While the violence, including the recent attack on the Jaffar Express, across the province are deeply concerning, the government must address root causes rather than punish innocent students. Shutting down educational institutions only deepens the alienation and resentment that fuel unrest in the first place. For Balochistan's youth, these closures represent more than just missed lectures. They symbolise the state's continued unwillingness to invest in the province's human capital and future. The state must recognise that genuine security cannot be achieved by sacrificing education. Rather than closing universities, it should address the legitimate grievances of Baloch students while providing adequate security measures that allow campuses to function. Most importantly, any temporary shift to online learning must be accompanied by immediate investments in digital infrastructure across the province. Balochistan's youth deserve the same educational opportunities afforded to students across Pakistan — and the dignity of being treated as citizens whose futures matter.

OPINION



BY SAKIB SHERANI

Predatory taxation

Pakistan's tax regime is anti-growth and investment, anti-documentation and inequitable.

TWENTY-FIVE IMF programmes, and at least 17 high-powered tax reform commissions, task forces and donor-funded programmes later, the country still finds itself struggling to raise revenue. Once again, another government has announced its intention to raise the tax-to-GDP ratio. The pattern of repeated failure over decades should be a moment for pause and introspection — both for the government and the IMF.

The need for additional revenue cannot be denied. Against an estimated tax revenue potential of around 20-22 per cent of GDP, government revenue totals 12.5pc of GDP, significantly below the average for low- and middle-income countries as a whole. Looked at from another perspective, the country is unable to fund its substantial spending needs with regards to public service delivery, ballooning pension liabilities or building climate resilience.

Despite the imperative to raise revenue, the country's tax effort has focused predominantly on a shrinking, already compliant formal sector. Even with a large, thriving informal economy, the country has failed to bring untaxed and lightly-taxed sectors into the tax net, and instead, has relied largely on existing taxpayers for mobilising additional revenues.

Enforcement failures of tax authorities have been reinforced by IMF programme design weaknesses. Making tax collection the linchpin of programme conditionality, compounded by the 'need for speed' built into a three-year programme, has generated perverse incentives for FBR. Instead of encouraging innovation and a fundamental change in its flawed model, the IMF programme design incentivises over-taxation of the already documented formal sectors of the economy to meet quarterly targets.

This not only leaves the large informal sector untaxed, documenting which should be a key tax policy objective, but has further widened the unbridged distance between formal and informal sector firms, increasing the incentive for formal sector firms to informalise — and for informal players to stay outside the tax net. This outcome is the exact opposite of what Pakistan's tax reform objective demands.

Apart from the revenue leakage, informal sec-

tor firms typically do not invest in building economies of scale, nor do they invest in training and productivity improvement of their workforce. For obvious reasons, informal sector firms are rarely recipients of foreign direct investment as well. Hence, the wider economic consequences of FBR policy and IMF conditionality on the tax front include not just more strain on documented firms and an erosion of the tax base in the longer run, but worst of all, a loss of competitiveness for formal firms. And this loops back to a small, and declining, export base — the primary cause of Pakistan's balance-of-payments problem in the first instance.

The less-than-optimal tax policy pursued historically has failed two of the most foundational objectives of taxation: promoting equity as well as efficiency. 'Equity' refers to fairness in the tax system, embodying both horizontal as well as vertical equity. 'Efficiency' in tax policy, on the other hand, focuses on minimising economic distortions and ensuring that the tax regime causes the least possible cost to economic activity, growth of firms and investment. By failing to meet the foundational objectives of a 'good' tax policy, Pakistan's tax regime has imposed large deadweight costs for documented businesses.

A perfect example of the limits as well as costs of our failed tax strategy is provided by the tobacco industry. With a total of over 40 cigarette manufacturers operating in the country, only two (the two multinational firms) are fully tax- and public health regulations-compliant. With an estimated 44pc market share, these two firms account for over 98pc of the entire tax revenue collected from the sector. The rest of the industry is free-riding.

Despite the rollout of the Track and Trace System by FBR to improve compliance in tax evasion-prone sectors, market surveys indicate that FTR compliance is very low. A recent survey conducted by the Institute for Public Opinion Research found only 19 cigarette brands out of 413 openly available in the market to be fully compliant. The compliance rate is only 4.6pc.

Instead of increasing the tax coverage of the entire industry via 'taxo-capturing' of the illicit segment through improved enforcement, the

government took the route of increasing the formal excise duty — with its entire incidence on the two formal firms — by an average of 23pc since June 2022. The excise taxation regime for the sector has undergone major ad hoc changes since 2017.

Frequent and unsustainable changes to the excise taxation regime, coupled with weak tax enforcement and lax compliance of tobacco-related government regulations, have shrunk the sales of legitimate cigarettes. For the first time, sales of illicit cigarettes outstripped legitimate brand sales for two consecutive years in 2022-23 and 2023-24. Illicit brands now dominate the market, with an estimated 56pc of market share, up from 26pc just five years ago. On current trends, illicit sales will account for 100pc of the cigarette market by 2030, if left unchecked.

With the major share of cigarette industry volume in the country now captured by the illicit sector, the annual revenue loss to the government is projected at a staggering \$4,000 billion, or nearly 0.3pc of GDP. To put this in context, the potential increase in tax revenue by \$4,000bn could cover around 25pc of the projected shortfall in FBR tax collection in 2024-25. At the prevailing exchange rate, the potential revenue loss to the government equals over \$1bn.

This pattern of over-taxing formal firms, and tolerating a flourishing illicit trade, is repeated across industry after industry in the country, be it tea, tyres, footwear, fast-moving consumer goods, beverages etc. The Pakistan Business Council estimates the value of annual illicit trade at a staggering \$4,800bn, which directly undercuts government revenue as well as survival of compliant formal firms.

The standout features of the country's tax regime are excessive taxation of the compliant few, weak enforcement, and discriminatory treatment. Without a fundamental rethink and reform, Pakistan's catastrophic tax regime will drive the country's already shrinking formal sector towards extinction. ■

The writer has been a member of several past economic advisory councils under different prime ministers.



BY KHURRAM HUSAIN

Beasts of burden

THIS is perfect. The power bureaucracy has decided to go on the offensive against users of net-metering services, and decided to describe them all as a 'burden' and tell the rest of the power users in the country that their bills are high because a few are escaping the grid by going solar.

And thanks to this misfire, this entirely unnecessary hostility, we now have the perfect illustration of why our country has been sinking into the quagmire of stagnation for so many decades. The central problem is this: as the world changed around them, our bureaucrats were busy trying to save their bureaucracy rather than finding ways to adapt, to keep pace with the change, and better still, to harness the new energies being unleashed all around them.

This has been the story of Pakistan's journey throughout the economic and technological transformations of the past half century. Our bureaucrats have basically succeeded in convincing successive governments that change is to be resisted, and where it cannot be resisted, it can be admitted only to be ignored later. This is what they did with tax reforms, for example, where the bureaucracy even resisted simple new technologies for automation, preferring manual entry and enshrouding them with the discretionary power that enabled the rackets which riddled the tax machinery. This is why liberalisation of trade resulted in little more than a consumption-based growth model here, because we like the consumption part of the package but not the investment part.

The same bureaucrats who have racked up a circular debt of \$42.3 trillion, who have held up every attempt to try and reform the structure of the power sector to bring performance-based incentives, transparency, merit-based hiring and overall managerial improvements, are now telling us that net-metering consumers are a 'burden' on the country.

One power minister, for example, claimed via his social media handle that there are now 283,000 net-metering beneficiaries. "However, this has now placed a \$4150 billion burden on the rest of the consumers," he went on. When

challenged on the \$4150bn figure by Mithal Ismail, he backtracked and said the figure related to overall losses and not what was paid to net-metering users. So whose fault is this overall loss of \$4150bn? And if our champions in the power bureaucracy cannot operate their system without racking up massive losses on this scale, then perhaps it is best for them to move aside, because it is they, and their incompetence, that is a burden on the power consumers of this country.

And do you know what happens with this circular debt once it has been racked up? They bundle it into the tariff and pass the cost on to those of us who pay their bills honestly and on time. There have been many such exercises in the past

What is broken in our power system is not the explosive growth of net-metering beneficiaries.

decade, and we are in the thick of another round of this right now as you read this, in order to secure the next tranche of the IMF programme. According to reports in the newspapers, consumers will be asked to pay \$42.80 per unit as an additional surcharge just to pay the cost of the commercial loan they are taking to help repackaging this circular debt. And then they have the nerve to describe others as a 'burden'.

Who is the real burden here? Those people who avoided a government policy, invested their own money to erect solar panels on their rooftops, or the bureaucrats of the power sector who cannot run the system and won't let anyone else run it either? In India, they have a power system that collectively sells more than 10 times the amount of electricity that Pakistan's power system does. They also have a problem with the circular debt, or the 'accumulated debt' as they call it there, and the reasons behind what drives this

debt over there are substantially similar to the ones here. Yet their total figure of this accumulated on a per unit basis is \$58 compared to \$78 in Pakistan. I understand there is no need to consider before diving things with this comparison, but given our power sector champions have a job 10 times smaller to do than their peers across the border, perhaps they could at least score slightly better on this scale?

But here is what our bureaucrats are responsible to. In the two years since June 2022, sales of electricity have actually dropped. It is hard to find an example in recent years where power sales fell for two consecutive years. In 2022, and again in 2024, the regulator notified hikes in the base tariff, in part to compensate for this drop, which the distribution companies blamed on the explosive growth of net-metering. So further back in time, and you'll notice Pakistan is ahead of its peers in the region in paying on the rising cost of power to its consumers, yet the pesky circular debt keeps returning. We have the fastest growing power tariffs in the region over the past decade and still the largest rate of accumulation of circular debt.

What is broken in our power system is not the explosive growth of net-metering beneficiaries. That is simply an expression of a revolution sweeping the world, much like the telecom sector saw a revolution from the early 2000s onward which swept away the landline infrastructure as an unnecessary mechanism. The same is happening to national grids around the world now. And vilifying it is not the way forward. As usual, our bureaucrats are busy shouting up the world in which they have always operated, rather than working to usher in the new that is being born all around us every day. The sad part is none of this was necessary. They could easily have reduced the net-metering rate without launching hostile words against the beneficiaries of that policy. But then again, that would take a little competence, something our bureaucrats are not bereft with. ■

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OPINION



BY F.S. AIJAZUDDIN

Warring cyclopes

THE West and Russia are two cyclopes who have never been able to see eye-to-eye. Over centuries, they have grown into giants with ambitions beyond their borders and power beyond their dreams. For the rest of the world, they are a nightmare.

The present conflict in and over Ukraine is more than a test of nerves or a test of their weaponry. It is a power show with the Ukraine Defence Contact Group (57 member countries including 34 NATO member states), each pulling the strings of a single marionette — the Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Zelenskyy began his career as a comedian. That should not be held against him. President Ronald Reagan — arguably one of the most successful US presidents in modern times — started as a Hollywood actor. His antipathy towards Russia erupted when in 1947, he testified before the House Un-American Activities Committee. He cited colleagues who had close links with the communist party.

As president, he dubbed the then Soviet Union an 'evil empire'. He spent more money — more than any other president — on strengthening US military prowess. In 1983, he defied the Soviets to compete with his Star Wars initiative — a space-based missile defence system — which would have been scrapped an already insolvent Soviet Union. His support of the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's glasnost and perestroika led to the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1990-91. Ironically, 35 years later, Reagan's successor Donald Trump is now beholden to Gorbachev's successor Vladimir Putin to consummate the US peace plan for Ukraine.

Over the years, US foreign policy vis-à-vis the Soviet Union/Russia has been a mix and match of deterrence and détente. Trump's predecessor preferred deterrence. Trump has opted for détente. Some have questioned Trump's motives; others suspect him of pro-Russian leanings. An advantage cited by many postcommunist leaders (notably Israel's Shimon Peres and Colombia's Juan Santos) should be enough to silence them: 'One doesn't make peace with one's friends. One makes peace with one's enemies.'

Santos made another observation: 'Waging war is much more popular than negotiating, because there you need to compromise.' That would explain the continued but waning indifference of Zelenskyy, egged on by the British-led Alliance of the Willing.

For Zelenskyy, now any compromise is acceptable, as long as it assures his survival. For Putin, no compromise is acceptable that does not restore (even partially) Russia's previous borders. For Trump, any compromise is acceptable if it can lead to the Nobel Peace Prize.

One forgets that in 2018, in Trump's first presidency, he watched passively while Saudi Crown Prince, Mohammed bin Salman and Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau exchanged barbs over human rights violations by Saudi Arabia. Ambassadors were recalled, airline links severed, trade reduced to a trickle, and Saudi investors ordered to liquidate their holdings in Canada. Trump remained aloof from the fray, advising Trudeau and MBS to sort it out themselves.

This month's new MBS play the detached host in Jeddah, while Trump's officials and Ukrainian representatives scored points off each other. It was a one-sided match. The high-powered US side consisted of Secretary of State Marco Rubio and National Security Adviser Mike Waltz, arm-twisted Zelenskyy's Russian business minister of foreign affairs, his beleaguered minister of defence, the head of his secretariat, and a lovely colonel.

Trump's tirades against Canada and Mexico and his moves on Greenland should be seen not so much as a revived isolationism

but as a structured, North-South axis strategy. The focus of Trump's US has forestalled its sights, from countries across the Atlantic and the Pacific to countries north and south sharing its archipelago.

That would leave Europe to the Russians, Taiwan and the Koreans to China, the Middle East to an emboldened Israel, and India to dominate the subcontinent. Trump has the next four years in which to fulfil his vision. He will leave his successor and history to record its consequences. Interestingly, both China's Xi Jinping and Indian PM Modi have chosen to remain silent vis-à-vis the Ukrainian imbroglio.

Meanwhile here, in Pakistan, dark clouds — a mini-Ukraine — are fermenting in Balochistan. The recent attacks on an unarmed passenger train and foreign against security forces are disturbing auguries. Like Ukraine, gas and precious minerals are involved.

Recently, one ambassador to Turkmenistan was deported from Los Angeles airport. Pakistanis students face arbitrary deportation. Pakistan is included in the draft group list of countries affected by travel restrictions into the US. India and Bangladesh enjoy an exemption from the three red, orange and yellow lists. There is a lesson for us in this, if only we had eyes to see. ■

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BY ALI NAWAB

Looking east

MOST thinking people take issue with certain negative traits found in society. These can include a weak moral compass, reduced civic engagement, disregard for environmental and social issues, prioritising competition over cooperation, etc. Academics often associate such traits with 'economic imperialism' that has even entered the educational domain. Education is now viewed solely as a tool to generate money, what is neglected is its search for truth and the way it transfers values. As a result, even the graduates of renowned institutions consider nothing more important than money, fame, power and self-interest.

Against this backdrop, many philosophers such as Tagore, Kurokawa and Nehruvianism cautioned against looking solely at Western models and advocated balancing modernisation with eastern traditions such as a focus on nature, creativity, group harmony, community-driven alternatives and lifelong learning. In Japan, as in some other Asian countries, one education theory is the 'theory of trees' which advocates fostering knowledge that has its roots in local values and traditions but that also absorbs useful external knowledge.

How does such a practice appear in our living context though? During a recent educational trip to Japan, we observed school practices that promote local values such as collaboration, group harmony, humility, respect and lifelong learning as well as encourage the use of innovative pedagogies such as team teaching, project-based learning, learning through play and ICT integration.

The most significant aspect of educational practice that attracted our attention was the way the teachers work together — planning lessons, implementing these plans and reflecting on the overall process to identify what worked and where it needed further improvement. They don't treat teaching as an isolated task — it's more like a shared mission, a joint effort that binds them together. Teaching is no longer the business of an individual teacher, rather teachers collectively pick up the expertise that exists in school. This process not only makes teaching a shared activity but also allows teachers to benefit from a shared expertise.

Educators in Japan do not simply talk about theories. What makes them distinct from us is their focus on practice rather than on theory. They seem to believe that actual knowledge springs from practice. As they practice, they collectively reflect on the process and thus generate more workable knowledge.

The result of what teachers do is pre-

dictable for students. Their collective efforts make the process of teaching and learning more vibrant, engaging and interactive. Students are engaged in hands-on activities; they work together, share ideas, pose questions, address problems and create something innovative when given certain situations and scenarios. They lead the process instead of simply being instructed. What we read about 21st-century skills in theory, they practice in the real sense.

It was refreshing to see not only the way the students worked and learned but also the way they behaved. Generally speaking, the students we interacted with were cooperative and humble — quite unlike some other settings, including ours, where classroom management issues are common. Their sense of respect and their willingness to work together created a learning space where ideas blossomed around naturally even if sometimes they appeared a bit unpolished.

Two significant factors appear to have contributed to the Japanese mastery of teaching and learning. One is 'lesson study', a professional learning model that has originated in Japan. This model allows teachers to collaboratively plan for lessons, implement their plans and observe the process and conduct a reflective inquiry into it. This ongoing, collaborative inquiry enables teachers to constantly improve their practices.

The second key factor is the collaboration between schools and universities. As we observed, university faculty spend sufficient time in schools, taking an active part in the process of 'lesson study' and systematically researching the practice. As their research is geared around practice, they generate further knowledge that informs it.

These apparently simple stories and lessons have significant implications for educational policies and practices in Pakistan. Bombarded with Western-generated theories and models, we have largely ignored our own values and the practice domain of education. To address the societal issues highlighted in the beginning, we have to consider the theory of trees to inform our practices and to revisit our approaches to both student and teacher learning. ■

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FROM THE PAST
PAGES OF DAWN

1975 | Fifty years ago

'No military designs'

RIVAJHI US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger has assured King Faisal that the United States harbours no military intentions towards Saudi Arabia. "I would like to state categorically here that our relations with Saudi Arabia are based on friendship and co-operation in which threats, military or otherwise, play no part," Dr Kissinger said after talks with King Faisal. American leaders, including President Ford and Dr. Kissinger himself, have repeatedly suggested that US may, militarily intervene to prevent any future Arab oil embargo in the context of developments in the Middle East. — News agencies

MUMBAI, as reported by news agencies from New Delhi, [the Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, charged with dishonest election practices, was cross-examined in court today [March 19] about business activities of members of her family. The judge in the High Court of Allahabad, ruled many of the questions irrelevant, but allowed them to be recorded after prosecution counsel insisted they touched on the integrity of Mrs. Gandhi. ... The fact that Mrs Gandhi chose to appear in person to defend herself underlined the significance of the trial. [She] gave evidence for over five hours spread over two days.

1950 | Seventy-five years ago

Refugee relief

BANGLA Shortly after his arrival here yesterday [March 18] the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr Liaquat Ali Khan, was closeted with the East Pakistan Cabinet for about 45 minutes. It is understood that discussions mainly centred round the problem of rehabilitation of the daily increasing number of refugees crossing over into East Pakistan from Bharat. Also present at the discussions were the Chief Secretary and the Relief Commissioner.

Mr Liaquat Ali Khan last night received a deputation of members of the minority community led by Mr B.K. Das, Leader of the Opposition in the East Pakistan Assembly. Mr Das later told the AFP that "the Prime Minister was very sympathetic towards the minorities in East Pakistan". It appears, he said, that the Prime Minister "has ... expressed his anxious willingness to help the minorities".

It is understood that relief measures for the affected members of the minority community in East Pakistan figured prominently during the discussions. The Prime Minister is understood to have asked the deputationists to give him concrete suggestions in this connection. — News agencies

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

letters@dawn.com

Letters may be edited for purposes of clarity and space. All letters should carry the writer's address, CNIC and phone numbers.

Reckless approach,
dreadful outcomes

THE recent tragic deaths due to certain antibiotic injections across various hospitals in Lahore have once again exposed the alarming state of antibiotic prescription and use in Pakistan.

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is an escalating crisis worldwide, but in our country, the overuse and misuse of antibiotics has touched reckless proportions with disastrous consequences.

A major contributor to this crisis is the injudicious prescribing of antibiotics by healthcare providers, often without clear clinical indications or proper diagnostic support.

The situation is further exacerbated by the over-the-counter (OTC) availability of antibiotics, allowing their rampant misuse by the general public. This unchecked consumption not only increases resistance, but also leads to severe adverse reactions, as seen in the recent fatalities.

Shockingly, most healthcare institutions in Pakistan lack formal antimicrobial stewardship programmes (ASPs) — structured initiatives that guide rational antibiotic use. Without ASPs, prescribers have no accountability, and inappropriate prescribing remains the norm rather than the exception.

Additionally, pharmaceutical companies, instead of promoting responsible prescribing, often prioritise profit over ethics, aggressively marketing broad-spectrum and injectable antibiotics with little oversight.

Another glaring gap in the national healthcare system is the absence of clinical audits to assess the competence of healthcare providers in prescribing antibiotics.

Regular audits and feedback mechanisms are crucial to identifying and rectifying prescribing errors, yet such systems are non-existent in most hospitals. Without quality control measures, the healthcare system continues to perpetuate

the irrational use of antibiotics, further fuelling resistance and patient harm.

The time for complacency has long passed. Urgent action is needed now by the authorities, such as strict regulation of antibiotic prescribing and OTC sales, mandatory implementation of ASPs in all healthcare institutions, curbs on unethical marketing practices by the pharmaceutical industry, regular clinical audits of institutions, and training programmes for healthcare providers.

Pakistan cannot afford to ignore the devastating consequences of antibiotic misuse. The recent deaths should serve as a wakeup call for policymakers, healthcare institutions and regulatory authorities to take immediate and decisive action.

If we fail to act now, we risk entering a post-antibiotic era where even minor infections would become untreatable.

Dr Ayesha Mahmood
Lahore

A junior's advice

BEING a medical student nearing graduation, I am writing on something that I think doctors should not be commenting on. This is derived from my observation of the statements of some doctors in the teaching hospital affiliated with my university and even in private setups.

Informing the patients precisely about the status of their disease and about the prognosis is essential for doctors. When a life-threatening disease, cancer, for example, has progressed and the prognosis is poor, doctors are required to disclose it to the patients so that they may plan accordingly.

For the same reason, doctors should warn the patients about the possible disability in case their disease is not controlled, like, say, the possible requirement for amputation in case of uncontrolled diabetes. Many doctors do realise these duties and fulfil them. However, some go beyond their domains in doing so.

This happens when the doctors simply say "You have a month of your life left", or "You will be able to work for two more years, but then disability will prevent you from doing so".

The doctors, based on scientific knowledge, can predict the outcome, and the patients and their attendants should pay heed to professional advice. But doctors are not entitled to commenting on the exact duration, for that is way beyond their own control.

During my clinical years, I have already seen a number of patients who apparently were to live for 'hours' according to their doctors, but survived for years, and patients who were to become bedridden 'in a matter of weeks', ended up enjoying good health for many, many months.

In contrast, I have also come across people

whose cardiac health was declared normal by their doctors, but they died of a heart attack just days later.

Life and death, especially the timing of an event, are matter way beyond the knowledge of science. The doctors should have this in mind while choosing to make their professional statements.

Muhammad Majid Shafi
Islamabad

Saving fertile lands

A NUMBER of farmers in Shigar Chakra, a remote area of Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), are losing their land due to river overflowing the banks and diverting its flow. The strong water currents erode the soil, washing away the fertile farmland and leaving families struggling.

With less land available, agricultural production in the region has declined, pushing farmers into deeper poverty. Many are unable to sustain their livelihoods and are compelled to migrate to other areas, or face financial hardships.

This crisis is not only affecting farmers, but also harming the ecosystem. Soil erosion leads to desertification, disrupting aquatic life and degrading water quality.

The loss of trees and vegetation along the riverbanks makes the land even more vulnerable, increasing the risk of further environmental damage. Without intervention, this problem will only worsen, threatening both local security and biodiversity in the region.

The government and environmental organisations should take immediate action. Constructing protective embankments, planting trees along the riverbanks, and introducing sustainable land management practices can help control erosion, and protect farmland.

The poor farmers need urgent support to save their livelihoods and secure a sustainable future. Effective steps must be taken before more land and lives are lost.

Jurair Shiger
Gilgit-Baltistan

Social decay

THE recent kidnapping and gruesome murder of young Mustafa Amir is a stark reminder of the decay in our society, and the abuse of power by the wealthy and the influential. The murderer, as reported, has links with the illegal business of illicit drugs. In a nutshell, this is what society has come down to.

After attacking and fatally injuring the young man, the culprits drove the body all the way to Hub in Balochistan in a car with tinted glasses and without a registration plate.

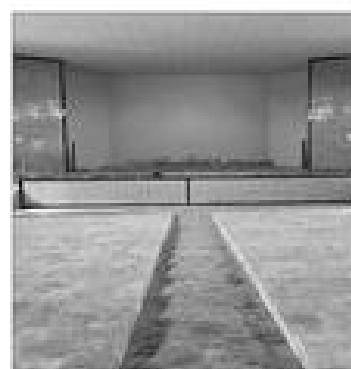
The car was crashed in a remote area. It is really surprising how the car was not

intercepted even once by the police along the way, or at the provincial border between Sindh and Balochistan.

After the gory incident, the father of the accused had the audacity to appear on various television channels, speaking in an aggressive and threatening tone.

In the past, wealthy and powerful criminals have evaded punishment. One hopes that speedy justice is served to the deceased young man's parents in this case.

Aamir Malik
Karachi



Unfinished project

IN the year 2007, the Naushahero Feroze district government started the construction of an auditorium between the District Complex and the Circuit House. Now, 17 years later, as can be seen in the accompanying image, the auditorium has not been completed, and is still not usable.

As a result, the educational and cultural city of Naushahero Feroze remains deprived of a platform where seminars, literary conferences, cultural events and stage plays may be organised.

The matter has been raised several times with the relevant authorities, a lot of complaints have been filed, and even the media has highlighted the issue, but all that the authorities have ever said on the matter is that there are budget constraints.

At a time when society is in dire need of positive academic and cultural activities, it is sad to deny the people of Naushahero Feroze such a basic right.

The relevant stakeholders should ensure the completion of the said auditorium so that the local people may also have a dignified and quality academic and cultural environment.

Depriving people of the city of a venue for learning and cultural activities despite having a structure is nothing but unfair.

Dr Abdul Qader Mirza
Naushahero Feroze

► CHALLENGES FOR THE FARMERS

The farmers in Pakistan have been facing various challenges. They do not have a proper irrigation system, quality seeds, fertilisers and sophisticated technology. They are also subjected to middlemen exploitation. Moreover, the lack of clear land rights, and continuous disputes between tenants and landlords exacerbate the situation. This issue hinders not only our agricultural productivity, but also hurts the livelihood of farmers. The government should address all these challenges so that the farmers may secure the success of their endeavours.

Ahmed Raza
Quetta

► DEPORTATION

Fourteen-year-old Mahab is one among many who had fled to Pakistan with their families, seeking safety from the turmoil in Afghanistan. Now, with the looming threat of mass deportation, all these innocent people face an uncertain and perilous future. Pakistan has been a haven of hope for millions fleeing conflict. This legacy of compassion will be compromised if the government proceeds with mass deportations. The government should reconsider its steps and work collaboratively with international organisations to come up with humane solutions.

Ayesha Rafiq
Rawalpindi

► EXTREMIST THREATS

The increasing incidents of extremism and violence across Pakistan are deeply alarming. In Balochistan, targeted attacks on security forces and infrastructure continue to destabilise the region, affecting both local communities and national development projects. Similarly, attacks on law-enforcement personnel and healthcare workers in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) undermine essential public services and national stability. The government must take comprehensive security measures while addressing the root causes of extremism. Strengthening intelligence operations, ensuring the protection of vulnerable communities, and promoting socioeconomic development are essential steps towards lasting peace.

Muhammad Zubair
Vehari

External Ombudsman

Veteran journalist Muhammad Ali Siddiqi is Dawn's External Ombudsman (DEO). His duty is to attend to our readers' complaints, and to respond to them professionally. DEO is the investigating authority to whom all complaints can be referred, and it is DEO who takes notice of any alleged violations of Dawn's code of ethics, and informs the Editor for appropriate action.

Email: muhammad.siddiqi@gmail.com

Bangladeshis turn to China for medical visas after India snub

NEW DELHI: India is resisting pleas by Bangladesh to resume issuing normal volumes of medical visas, citing staffing shortages and worsening ties, six sources said, giving China rare space to expand similar offerings and build people-to-people ties.

The bulk of India's visas for Bangladeshis in 2023 went to those seeking its affordable private healthcare and Bengali-speaking hospital staff, helping to cement ties between the neighbours and limit China's regional influence. "When there is a vacuum, others will come and fill the space," one of four Bangladesh sources, most of them diplomats, said. "Some people are going to Thailand and China."

Since August, India has handed out fewer than 1,000 medical visas each working day, down from a figure of 5,000 to 7,000, said the sources. The numbers have fallen as relations have cooled after Bangladesh's interim government, led by Nobel peace laureate Muhammad Yunus, replaced India's long-term ally Sheikh Hasina.

Fleeing deadly protests that unseated her in August, Hasina sought refuge in New Delhi, and India has not responded since to Bangladesh's request to send her home for trial. In 2023, India issued more than 2 million visas to Bangladeshis, most of them on medical grounds, government data from both countries show. But its withdrawal since has opened an enticing gap for China.

Just this month, a group of Bangladeshis visited the southwestern province of Yunnan for treatment, in a bid to "explore the potential of the medical tourism market," said the Chinese ambassador, Yao Wen. And at least 14 of its companies have invested more than \$200 million in Bangladesh since the interim government took office, the most of any country in that period, Wen said last week.—Reuters

Six drown, 40 missing after migrant shipwreck

ROME: Six people died and 40 are missing after a migrant shipwreck in the Mediterranean, the United Nations said on Wednesday, as Italian authorities searched for survivors off the island of Lampedusa.

"Still too many dead in a new shipwreck in the Mediterranean," Chiara Cardarelli, the Italy representative of the UN refugee agency UNHCR, said on X. An inflatable dinghy carrying 56 people left the Tunisian port of Man on Monday before getting into trouble, she said. "After a few hours of sailing, the dinghy began to deflate and take on water. Six bodies recovered, 40 missing," she wrote.

Italy's coastguard said it pulled 10 people to safety and was scouring the area for survivors. "Due to the particularly adverse weather and sea conditions, the search operations are being carried out with the support of various aircraft... which will take turns in covering the area," the coastguard said in a statement.

Those included aircraft belonging to Frontex, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, it said. The dinghy was reportedly found partially deflated off the tiny rocky outcrop of Lampedusa, to the west of Lampedusa, which lies closer to North Africa than Europe. The search and rescue centres in Malta and Tunisia have both been alerted as part of efforts to recover the missing, the coastguard said.—AFP



SUPPORTERS of Istanbul Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu gather outside Istanbul's municipality building to protest his detention.—Reuters

Turkiye detains Istanbul mayor, Erdogan's main rival

Supporters of Imamoglu storm the streets slamming govt

ISTANBUL: Turkish police detained Istanbul's powerful Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu on Wednesday in connection with two investigations into graft and "supporting terror," a move that the main opposition party slammed as a politically-motivated "coup".

Imamoglu is President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's main political rival and his detention came just days before he was to be named the candidate of the main opposition party CHP in the 2028 presidential election.

Widely seen as the strongest challenger to Erdogan, Imamoglu has been targeted by a growing number of what critics say are spurious legal investigations. Hundreds of police joined the pre-dawn raid on his home, Imamoglu said on X, with the government saying his detention was linked to a corruption probe and another for "helping a terror organisation".

Shortly afterwards, Türkiye briefly blocked access to social networks, with police banning out around City Hall and closing off

Taksim Square, banning all protests for four days. "What has happened is an attempted coup," railed CHP leader Oguz Delik in a speech at City Hall.

"Ekrem Imamoglu's freedom to be a candidate is not being taken away, it is this nation's freedom to elect him that is being taken away." His words were echoed by the mayor's wife, Dr Dilek Kaya Imamoglu.

"This is a targeted political operation aimed at eliminating Türkiye's future president. This is a direct blow to the nation, and we will fight," she vowed.

Several European mayors signed a statement denouncing his detention, saying it "not only poses a threat to individual rights but also challenges the fabric of democratic governance in the region." Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo said she was "shocked" to learn of the raid, saying it was "a new step in the Erdogan regime's crackdown on opposition mayors" and demanding to be released immediately.

The move against Imamoglu drew a sharp condemnation from Berlin, with the foreign ministry saying it was a "serious setback for democracy".

Anger on the streets

There was also anger on the

streets. "We're living in a dictatorship!" angrily said a shopkeeper in his 40s called Kenan.

"Whenever this guy and his dirty team see someone strong, they panic and do something illegal," he said, referring to Erdogan and the AKP who have been in power since 2003. "In the past, it was soldiers who carried out coups. Today it's the politicians," sighed 63-year-old Hasan Yildiz.

Despite the protest ban, 300 people rallied outside the police station where the mayor was taken to Fatih district, yelling "Imamoglu, you are not alone!" and "Government resign!". Nearby, police fired tear gas to disperse some 400 students protesting outside Istanbul University over its decision to revoke Imamoglu's degree.

The pre-dawn raid on Imamoglu's home sparked chaos on the country's financial markets, with the Turkish lira falling 14.5 per cent against the dollar, and the benchmark BIST 100 shedding 7.02pc.

Justice Minister Yigit Tuzcu said Imamoglu was one of seven people being investigated for the "alleged crime of aiding and abetting a terrorist organisation" — a reference to the banned Kurdish PKK group.—AFP

Record 2024 temperatures accelerate ice loss

SINGAPORE: Record greenhouse gas levels helped bring temperatures to an all-time high in 2024, accelerating glacier and sea ice loss, raising sea levels and edging the world closer to a key warming threshold, the UN weather body said on Wednesday.

Annual average mean temperatures stood at 1.55 degrees Celsius (2.79 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels last year, surpassing the previous 2023 record by 0.1C, the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) said in its annual climate report.

Countries agreed in the 2015 Paris Agreement to strive to limit temperature increases to within 1.5C above the 1850-1900 average. Preliminary estimates put the current long-term average increase at between 1.34-1.49C, closing in on but not yet exceeding the Paris threshold, the WMO said.

"One thing to point out very clearly is that one single year above 1.5 degrees doesn't mean that the level mentioned in the Paris agreement had been formally exceeded," said John Kennedy, WMO's scientific coordinator and lead author of the report. But uncertainty ranges in the data mean that it cannot be ruled out, he said during a briefing.

The report said other factors could also have driven global temperature rises last year, including changes in the solar cycle, a massive volcanic eruption and a decrease in cooling aerosols.

While a small number of regions saw temperatures fall, extreme weather wreaked havoc across the globe, with droughts causing food shortages and floods and wildfires forcing the displacement of 800,000 people, the highest since records began in 2008.—Reuters

Man survives seven hours under Norway avalanche

OSLO: A tourist buried by an avalanche in northern Norway was pulled out alive in a "miracle" rescue on Wednesday, after spending seven hours trapped beneath the snow, local media reported.

Described as being in his forties or fifties, the man was found, conscious, under about 1.5 metres (5 feet) of snow shortly after midnight in the municipality of Lyngen. He had then spent nearly seven hours in an air pocket from where he had been able to call the police.

"People who survive an avalanche usually suffocate within 10 minutes" if they're buried under the snow, Anders Hestland, an avalanche researcher from the University of Tromsø, told newspaper (Tromsø). "Some survive longer. But seven hours is almost unique in history," he added.

Kristian Michalsen, a dog handler who with his dog Whiskey found the man, told TV2 that "It was very surprising that he was still alive." "All the statistics and experience say that it's not possible when you stay buried for so long," he added.

The mayor of Lyngen, Erik Larsen, quoted by public broadcaster NRK, called it "a miracle." The man was part of a group of three foreign tourists on a ski tour in a region where authorities warned there was a high risk of avalanches.

Another member of the trio was also caught by the rushing snow and swept into the waters of a fjord below. He managed to get ashore and was able to contact authorities. A search operation is continuing for a woman who is still missing. The nationalities of the tourists have not been disclosed.—AP

'Dark universe detective' telescope releases first data

PARIS: Europe's Euclid space telescope, which is on a mission to shed light on the mysteries of dark matter and dark energy, released its first data on Wednesday with a little help from volunteers and artificial intelligence.

The telescope launched in 2023, aiming to chart one-third of the sky — encompassing 1.5 billion galaxies — to create what has been billed as humanity's most accurate 3D map of the universe.

Euclid, which is now hovering 1.5 million kilometres from Earth, has previously released images of a range of strange galaxies, colourful nebulae and shining stars. But the first release

of astronomical data is "a new milestone for our dark universe detective," the European Space Agency's science director Carole Mundell told a press conference.

The large amount of data — which was accompanied by 27 scientific papers — still only covers less than 0.5 per cent of the sky that Euclid will scan over its six-year mission.

Snagging the 'cosmic web'

Yet the early data already offers hints about the overall structure of the universe known as the "cosmic web," project scientist Valeria Pettorini said. Between large empty spaces,

there are massive clusters of galaxies connected by filaments of material which make up the web, she explained.

This immensely massive structure cannot be explained by visible matter alone, so scientists believe dark matter and dark energy must play a role. These invisible forces are thought to make up 95pc of the universe yet remain shrouded in mystery. Dark matter is believed to be the glue that holds galaxies together, while dark energy pulls them apart by making the universe expand faster and faster over time.

Because looking into distant space also means looking back in time,

Euclid allows scientists to track this cosmic tangle over most of the history of the universe — and hopefully discover more about their true nature. "Ultimately, we want to test the laws of gravity," Mundell said.

Einstein's theory of relativity has passed every test thrown at it, "but it does not yet, in its current form, explain the accelerated expansion of the universe", which is driven by dark energy, she explained. However the new data did not contain any major revelations about dark matter and dark energy. That will have to wait until closer to the end of Euclid's mission, the scientists said.—AFP



EUROPEAN telescope Euclid's new image of galaxies in different shapes during its first observations of deep space.—AFP



SEOUL: The Statue of Peace, a bronze statue symbolising the victims of Japanese military sexual slavery during World War II, is surrounded by police fencing near the Japanese embassy, on Wednesday. The sculpture was installed in 2011 by a South Korean civic group.—AFP



NAIVASHA (Kenya): Dutch King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima taken to a worker as they visit Florencia, a flower propagating farm, on Wednesday.—Reuters

NEWSMAKERS



A VIEW of a Chinese-made baby doll at a vendor's home in Hanoi. The doll's marking on its cheek is believed to resemble China's rare-dash line in South China Sea.—AFP

Toy trouble: Vietnam pulls dolls over South China Sea map

HANOI: Seething international tensions over the South China Sea have struck an unlikely victim in Vietnam: popular children's dolls pulled from shelves over a facial mark supposedly resembling Beijing's claims in the flash-point waterway.

Small and fluffy, with large eyes and rabbit ears, Chinese-made "Baby Three dolls" became a mainstay among Vietnamese kids and Generation Z earlier this year and had been flying off shelves across the country.

That was until an online backlash began over the "Ewen rabbit V2" model of the doll — and a marking on its cheek that was said to resemble China's "nine-dash line". Beijing has long used the line to justify its claims over most of the resource-

rich South China Sea, often to the displeasure of Vietnam, which also claims parts of the waterway.

In response to the online outcry, the industry and trade ministry ordered an inspection of toys supposedly displaying the nine-dash line, which it warned were "affecting national security and territorial sovereignty".

Vendors in Hanoi said that most of the offending dolls had been pulled from shelves, but their once-booming business has been shattered, with sales of all models nearly down.

Le said she used to regularly sell 300 Baby Three dolls a day for up to \$20 each, but her sales had declined to almost nothing, with just a few now flagged at reduced rates.—AFP



MOSCOW: Traditional Russian wooden nesting dolls depicting President Vladimir Putin and US President Donald Trump are on display for sale at a gift shop, on Wednesday.—AFP



LONDON: Bornham Tree Aid Director, Thomas Fung, and other activists take part in a protest marking the first anniversary of the implementation of the Hong Kong National Security Ordinance outside the College Green, near Houses of Parliament, on Wednesday. The new security law covers treason, sedition and state secrets, allowing for trials to be held behind closed doors.—AP

Judge says Columbia protester must remain in US for now

NEW YORK A US judge on Wednesday said Columbia University student Mahmood Khalil must remain in the United States for now, but moved his challenge to the legality of his arrest over his participation in pro-Palestinian protests to a court in New Jersey.

Manhattan-based US District Judge Jesse Furman denied a bid by the Trump administration to dismiss the case, but agreed with the Justice Department that he did not have jurisdiction because Khalil was held in New Jersey at the time his lawyers first challenged his arrest in New York.

The case has become a flashpoint for Republican President Donald Trump's pledge to deport some non-US citizens who took part in the protests against Israel's military campaign in Gaza that swept American college campuses including Columbia after the October 2023 raid by Hamas.

It will now be up to the New Jersey court to rule on Khalil's bid to declare his arrest unconstitutional, and to be released on bail or moved. Khalil's lawyers say his wife, an American citizen named Rana Aladallah, cannot visit him in Louisiana, where he is currently being held, because she is eight months pregnant with their first child.

Khalil's lawyer Samah Nisay said in a statement on Wednesday that the government moved him to Louisiana to avoid having the case heard in New York or New Jersey. "Mr. Khalil should be free and home with his wife awaiting the birth of their first child, and we will continue to do everything possible to make that happen," Nisay said.

Khalil, 35, was arrested by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents on March 8 outside his university residence in Manhattan. His lawyers have said that he was targeted in retaliation for his role in advocating for Palestinian rights, meaning the arrest violated Free speech protections under the US Constitution's First Amendment.—Reuters

UK teen who planned school massacre jailed for life

LONDON A UK teenager who killed three family members and planned to murder notorious US mass shooter in the world's most famous school shooter of the 21st century was on Wednesday jailed for a minimum of 49 years.

Nicholas Prosper, 18 at the time of the killings, used a shotgun to kill his mother Juliana Hobson, 48, sister Charlie, 14, and brother Kyle, 16, who also received more than 100 knife wounds, at their home in Luton, north of London, in Sept 2024.

"Your ambition was notoriety. You wanted to be known posthumously as the world's most famous school shooter of the 21st century," judge Robbie Croom-Grobb said on Wednesday as she sentenced the now 19-year-old.

Prosper told police upon his arrest of his "Friday the 13th" plan to also kill several four- and five-year-old pupils and two teachers at a nearby primary school that he had previously attended, then himself. He said his aim was to conduct an attack more deadly than the US Sandy Hook and Virginia Tech massacres, but that the plan was interrupted when his mother woke up before he could kill his family in their sleep.

The noisy struggle alerted neighbors, who called the police. After killing her he placed a novel with the title "How to Kill your Family" on her body. "You explicitly sought to emulate and outdo Adam Lanza, the 20-year-old American who shot dead 20 children and six adults at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut in 2012," the judge said.

"You aimed for 34 deaths, one more than the deadliest school shooting of recent times in the United States of America, at Virginia Tech in 2007," she added.—AFP



PROTESTERS clash with police during a rally in Jerusalem against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.—Reuters

Opposition to Israeli PM finds voice as conflict returns to Gaza

Opinion polls suggest Netanyahu likely to lose upcoming election due to continuing public anger over Tel Aviv's failure to stop Oct 7 raid

JERUSALEM A coalition of Hamas-held Israeli prisoner's families and protesters against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's move against the judiciary and parts of the security establishment is coming together again after conflict returned this week to Gaza.

The prime minister's decision to resume the conflict and bombard the Palestinian enclave, with 59 prisoners — around 24 of whom are believed to be alive — still held in Gaza has added fresh fuel to the anger of protesters, who accuse the government of continuing the conflict for political reasons.

Tens of thousands demonstrated on Tuesday night and more protests were taking place on Wednesday after Netanyahu announced at the weekend that he had lost confidence in Ronen Bar, the head of the Shin Bet domestic intelligence agency, and had decided to sack him.

"This is no longer a war that is about something that is important, it is all about the survival of this government, the survival of Benjamin Netanyahu," said Keren Ofir, a protester in Jerusalem.

Protest groups have ranged from the Defense Shield Forum, a group representing former defence and security officials, and the Movement for Quality Government in Israel, an anti-corruption group that was active in a bitter battle in 2023 over curbing the power of the Supreme Court, alongside families of the prisoners in Gaza. There is an echo in the current movement of the huge protests that erupted in 2023

— before the Oct 7 Hamas raid — when Netanyahu attempted to sack then Defence Minister Yoav Gallant over his opposition to the planned judicial overhaul. It reflects a conviction among critics of Netanyahu that the election prime minister represents a danger to Israel's democracy. "This government does not stop at red lights," Yair Lapid, a former prime minister and head of the centre left opposition party Yesh Atid, said on the social media platform X.

"Enough! I call on all of you — this is our moment, this is our future. Take to the streets." While his right-wing coalition holds together, Netanyahu has been able to defy the protests and stave off calls for new elections. Opinion polls suggest he would lose an election due to continuing public anger over the failures that allowed Hamas to raid southern communities on Oct 7, 2023, in Israel's worst security disaster. Tuesday's announcement by extreme hardliner Itamar Ben Gvir that he would resign the government, after walking out over the ceasefire deal signed in January, underlined the political endorsement the government has gained from the nationalist religious camp whose support has been vital.

"Dismissing political unity"

Critics of Netanyahu saw his decision to dismiss the head of Shin Bet as a blow to a key state institution that was infiltrated for political reasons linked to Shin Bet's involvement in investigations into allegations of corruption by aides in Netanyahu's office.

Netanyahu calls the allegations a politically motivated attack on him. He said the decision on Bar was because he had long ago lost trust in the security chief.

Benny Gantz, head of the largest centrist opposition party, said the decision to fire Bar represented "a direct violation of state security and the dismantling of political unity in Israel for political and personal reasons".—Reuters

Trump floats US ownership of Ukraine's power plants

In phone call with the US president, Zelensky says Kyiv is ready to stop attacks on Russian power plants

WASHINGTON President Donald Trump has raised the possibility of the United States taking ownership of Ukrainian power plants, the White House said on Wednesday as efforts to end the war with Russia proceed.

"American ownership of these plants would be the best protection for that infrastructure and support for Ukrainian energy infrastructure," Karloline Lewis told a briefing hours after Trump spoke with his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky.

Trump hailed a "very good" call with Zelensky on Wednesday, a day after his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin, agreed to temporarily halt attacks on Kyiv's power plants.

Trump said efforts to secure a full ceasefire remained "on track" despite the fact that his call with Putin failed to produce any broader peace deal.

An Kyiv and Moscow accused each other of continuing attacks, Zelensky said after the "talk" call that Ukraine was ready to pose strikes on both Russian energy and civilian infrastructure.

Trump said he spoke for around an hour with his Ukrainian counterpart, their first conversation since they had a 15-minute televised row in the Oval Office just over two weeks ago.

"Much of the discussion was based on the call made yesterday with President Putin in order to align both Russia and Ukraine in terms of their requests and needs," Trump said on his Truth Social network.

"We are very much on track." The White House later said that during the call Trump had floated US "ownership" of Ukrainian power plants as it would be the "best protection" for them.

The billionaire former real estate mogul has already pushed Kyiv into a deal to give the United States preferential access to its critical mineral resources.

Trump also pledged to help Ukraine get more air defence equipment from Europe, a statement from National Security Adviser Mike Waltz and Secretary of State Marco Rubio said.

"Selected"

But while Ukraine has already agreed to a US plan for an unconditional 30-day ceasefire with Russia, Putin is still rebuffing.

The Kremlin leader insisted during his call with Trump that a full ceasefire was only possible if the West halts its billions of dollars in military aid to Kyiv . Moscow's long-standing demand.

Putin also demanded Ukraine must not be allowed to rearm, and that it must halt mandatory mobilisation.

Despite both Ukraine and Russia saying they now backed a temporary truce on power plants, each accused the other of failing to adhere to the deal.

Ukraine's defence ministry said an overnight barrage of Russian missile and drones struck the war-torned nation, killing one person and damaging two hospitals.

"Today Putin effectively rejected the proposal for a full ceasefire," said Zelensky.

Ukraine's railway service said the barrage had hit rail way energy infrastructure in the central Dnipropetrovsk region.

Russia's defence ministry reported a "deliberate" Ukrainian attack overnight on an oil depot in the south of the country, which they said was aimed at "derailing" Trump's attempts to broker an end to the fighting.—AFP

PESHAWAR DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
REGI MODEL TOWN, ZONE-IV OFFICE, PESHAWAR
AUCTION OF COMMERCIAL, HEALTH PLOTS, SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND AMUSEMENT PARK IN REGI MODEL TOWN PESHAWAR

Peshawar Development Authority intends to auction the following Commercial, Health Plots, School buildings and Amusement Park in Regi Model Town Peshawar on partnership and lease basis as per detail given against each property on 17-04-2025 at 5:00 P.M. in Peshawar Development Authority Zone-IV Office at Regi Model Town, Peshawar.

Sr. No.	Detail of Property	Size	Reserve / Base Price	Call deposit amount	Mode of Auction
1	Commercial Plot at Sectorial Center-C, Zone-III, Regi Model Town, Peshawar	04 Kanals	Rs. 80,000,000/- Per Kanal total reserve /base price of Plot comes to Rs. 240,000,000/-	Rs. 72,00,000/-	Ownership
2	Commercial Plot at Sector C-III, Zone-IV, Regi Model Town, Peshawar	03.25 Kanals	Rs. 60,000,000/- Per Kanal total reserve /base price of plot comes to Rs. 75,000,000/-	Rs. 22,50,000/-	Ownership
3	Health Facility Plot at Sectorial Center-C, Zone-III, Regi Model Town, Peshawar	04 Kanals	Rs. 45,000,000/- Per Kanal total reserve /base price of plot comes to Rs. 180,000,000/-	Rs. 54,00,000/-	Ownership
4	Health Facility plot at Sector C-III, Zone-IV, Regi Model Town, Peshawar	2.37 Kanals	Rs. 45,000,000/- Per Kanal total reserve /base price of Plot comes to Rs. 108,000,000/-	Rs. 32,00,000/-	Ownership
5	School Building constructed on Plot at Zonal Center, Zone-IV Regi Model Town, Peshawar (fully constructed)	30.17 Kanals	Rs. 5,00,000,000/- (Non-refundable premium) with Rs. 2,50,000/- per month rent with 25% increase after every 3 years.	Rs. 75,00,000/-	33 years lease basis
6	School Building constructed on plot at Zonal Center, Zone-IV Regi Model Town, Peshawar (Partly constructed)	10.17 Kanals	Rs. 5,00,000,000/- (Non-refundable premium) with Rs. 2,50,000/- per month rent with 25% increase after every 3 years.	Rs. 25,00,000/-	33 years lease basis
7	Installation and operation of Amusement Park in Central Park at Zone-III Regi Model Town, Peshawar	5.20 Kanals	Rs. 150,00,000/- (non-refundable premium) with Rs. 5,00,000/- rent per month with 10% annual increase.	Rs. 10,00,000/-	30 Years lease basis.

1. Auction will be conducted in accordance with PDA Auction Regulations-2021 as amended. Interested parties are required to submit Call Deposits of the amount as specified above from any scheduled Banks in Peshawar in the name of Director General, Peshawar Development Authority latest one day prior to auction date.

ii. Detailed terms and conditions of the Auction can be downloaded from PDA Website (www.pda.kp.gov.pk).

iv. Hard copy of the terms and conditions can also be seen/obtained from the office of the undersigned during working hours.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR ESTATE MANAGEMENT
Regi Model Town, PDA Peshawar

Smiles, thumbs ups and a safe return for stranded Nasa astronauts

WASHINGTON Home at last: After an unexpected nine-month stay in space, a pair of Nasa astronauts finally returned to Earth on Tuesday, concluding a mission that captured global attention and became a political flashpoint.

A SpaceX Crew Dragon spaceship carrying British Williams and Scott Williams — alongside fellow American Nick Hague and Russian cosmonaut Aleksandr Gorbunov — streaked through the atmosphere before deploying parachutes for a gentle splash-down off the Florida coast at 5:53pm.

Ground teams erupted in cheers as the game-drop-shaped spacecraft named Freedom, charred from scorching re-entry temperatures of 3,500 degrees Fahrenheit during re-entry, bobbed steadily on the waves beneath a clear, sunny sky. "What a ride — I see a capsule full of grins," said Hague.

As first light dawned to the capsule for initial safety checks — an unlikely event arrived in the form of a playful pod of dolphins, soon after, a larger recovery vessel hoisted Freedom aboard. Teams opened the hatch, and one by one, the astronauts were helped out onto military aids, waving and flashing thumbs-up signs. Next, they will be flown by helicopter to Houston, where they will be able to meet their families in another day or two, and begin a physical rehabilitation programme. "PROMISE MADE, PROMISE KEPT," the White House posted on X, repeating a contentious claim that President Donald Trump's administration had accelerated the recovery timeline.

The quartet left the International Space Station early Sunday, beginning their 17-hour journey home after final farewells and hugs with the remaining crew. Williams and Williams, both ex-Navy pilots and veterans of two prior space missions, flew to the orbital lab in June last year, on what was supposed to be a days-long research tour on Boeing's Starliner on its first crewed flight.

However, propulsion issues rendered the spacecraft unfit for their return, forcing it to remain empty. They were subsequently reassigned to Nasa's SpaceX Crew-9 mission, which arrived at the ISS last September with a reduced crew of two — rather than the usual four — to accommodate the pair, who had become widely referred to as the "stranded" astronauts.

With Crew-10 docking Sunday, Crew-9 was finally cleared to depart. Williams and Williams' 286-day stay exceeds the typical shortest 188 rotation but ranks sixth among US records. Frank Rubio holds the longest single-mission US stay at 371 days, while Russian cosmonaut Valeri Polyakov retains the world record at 437 days.

Despite the challenges of prolonged spaceflight — including muscle and bone loss, vision issues, and balance readjustment — experts say their nine-month stay is manageable in terms of health risks. However, the unexpected nature of their extended mission, initially without sufficient supplies, sparked public sympathy.

"If you found out you went to work today and were going to be stuck in your office for the next nine months, you might have a panic attack," Joseph Keubler, a psychologist at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, said. "These individuals have shown unbelievable resilience".—AFP

US strikes hit targets in Yemen

CADIZ The United States struck targets in the Yemeni capital of Sanaa on Wednesday, Houthi-run Al-Masirah TV reported, the latest in a wave of strikes carried out in retaliation for attacks by the Iran-aligned group on shipping in the Red Sea.

Three residents said that the strikes had hit the Al-Jarrah district of Sanaa, close to the city's airport.

The strikes also hit an under-construction occasion hall in a residential neighbourhood in Al-Thawra district, in Sanaa, injuring nine people, mostly women and children, Amran al-Ashabi, spokesperson for the Houthi-run health ministry said in a post on X.

Al-Masirah said the strikes also targeted Al-Sawa'ida directorate in Yemen's al-Bayda province in southern Yemen. The province is known to have military sites and weapons warehouses owned by the Houthis.

The US began the current wave of strikes on Houthi targets in Yemen last

Saturday, killing at least 31 people in the biggest such operation since President Donald Trump returned to the White House in January.

Trump also threatened to hold Iran accountable for any future Houthi attacks, warning of severe consequences. Iran's Revolutionary Guards said the Houthis were independent and took their own strategic and operational decisions.

Unfazed by the US strikes and threats, the Houthis have said they will escalate their attacks, including on Israel, in response to the US campaign.

On Tuesday, the Houthis said they had fired a ballistic missile towards Israel and would expand their range of targets in that country in coming days in retaliation for renewed Israeli airstrikes in Gaza after weeks of relative calm.

The Houthi force carried out over 100 attacks on shipping since Israel's war with Hamas began in late 2023, saying they were acting in solidarity with Gaza's Palestinians.—Reuters

INVITATION TO E-BID THROUGH SAP-ARIBA DISCOVERY

E-Bids are invited through SAP-Ariba Discovery for the service/material given below under competitive bidding procedure as per Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) rules:

Sl. #	TENDER NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	CLOSING DATE & TIME
1.	OGDCL-SCM-LBB-PT-PMP-CKN-280048904-2025	PROPANE	08-04-2025 AT 11:30 Hrs
2.	OGDCL-SCM-LD-PT-ADMMN-279965860-2025	ELECTRICAL CABLE	08-04-2025 AT 11:30 Hrs
3.	OGDCL-SCM-LB-PT-PMP-KNR-281700872-2025	GASKETS	08-04-2025 AT 11:30 Hrs
4.	OGDCL-SCM-LF-PT-DRI-SL-281707008-2025	TYRES, TUBES AND FLAPS	08-04-2025 AT 11:30 Hrs
5.	OGDCL-SCM-LF-PT-PEMFD-TOGH-279791757-2025	CRANE MOUNTED TRUCK	09-04-2025 AT 11:30 Hrs

2. All bids will be opened 30 minutes after the bids closing date/ time.

3. Tender Notice/ detailed instructions are available on PPRA website at www.ppra.org.pk.

4. Tender documents are available online and bids are also required to be submitted online through e-procurement portal at <https://ogdcl.com/sap-ariba-tenders> or discovery.ariba.com/profile/AN01562872521 for details see "Instruction for Bidders Section" of the tender documents.

5. OGDCL reserves the right to accept or reject any bid and to award the bidding process and reject all the bids as per Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) Rule-33.

GENERAL MANAGER
(SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT)
OIL & GAS DEVELOPMENT COMPANY LIMITED
OGDCL HOUSE, JERBAH AVENUE, ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN
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20 dead as Israeli forces roll back into Gaza

• ICRC says medics struggling to cope with spike in casualties • UNOPS staffer killed in 'Israeli strike' • Health ministry records nearly 1,000 deaths over 48 hours • World leaders flay resumption of hostilities

GAZA: Long lines of fleeing civilians filled the roads on Wednesday after the Israeli military announced its forces had resumed ground operations in the central and southern Gaza Strip.

A second day of airstrikes claimed the lives of at least 20 Palestinians, as Israel extended its control over the Rafah Corridor, which bisects Gaza, to create a partial buffer zone between the north and the south of the enclave.

The renewed ground operations came a day after more than 400 Palestinians were killed in airstrikes in one of the deadliest days since the beginning of the conflict, shattering a ceasefire has largely held since January.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) warned on Wednesday that medics were struggling to manage a sharp increase in casualties over the last 36 hours due to the resumption of ground operations by Israel.

Meanwhile, the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) said that one of its workers was killed and five wounded when an explosive was "dropped or fired" at its headquarters in the central Gaza Strip.

UNOPS chief Jorge Moreira da Silva said in a statement that he was "shocked and devastated" by the staff member's death. "This was not an accident," he said, adding that "attacks against humanitarian premises are a breach of international law" and that UN personnel and premises "must be protected by all sides".

970 deaths in two days

The war death toll updated daily by the health ministry showed an increase of 970 in the space of 48 hours, though AFP could not confirm how many of them were recorded as casualties from the strikes.

The death toll from the war in the Gaza recorded by the ministry at midday on Monday stood at 48,577. By midday on Wednesday, the figure had risen to

49,547, it said. Israel launched a wave of strikes on Gaza overnight between Monday and Tuesday, by far the deadliest since a fragile truce began in January.

Families with young children fled northern Gaza for areas further south, fearing for their lives after Israel urged civilians to leave areas it described as "combat zones".

Governments in the Middle East, Europe and beyond called for the renewed hostilities to end.

"The resumption of Israeli strikes yesterday (Tuesday), despite the efforts of mediators, represents a dramatic step backwards," said French President Emmanuel Macron ahead of talks with Jordan's King Abdullah II.

German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said Israel's raids on Gaza "are shattering the tangible hopes of so many Israelis and Palestinians of an end to suffering on all sides".

European Union foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said she told her Israeli counterpart Gilboa Sagar that the new strikes on Gaza were "unacceptable".

Both Egypt and Qatar, which brokered the Gaza ceasefire alongside the United States, condemned Israel's return to military action.

Negotiations have stalled over how to proceed with a ceasefire — whose first phase expired in early March. Israel and the UN have sought to change the terms of the deal by extending stage one. That would delay the start of phase two, which was meant to establish a lasting ceasefire and an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, and was swiftly rejected by Hamas, which demanded full implementation of the original deal.

Israel and the US have portrayed Hamas's rejection of an extended stage one as a refusal to release more Israeli prisoners in exchange for Palestinian ones. — Agencies



PALESTINIANS fleeing Israeli bombings leave their homes in Beit Hanoun on Wednesday after the Israeli army issued evacuation orders for a number of neighbourhoods. — Reuters

FM Dar discusses consular issues with US envoy

By Basir Sajid Syed

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Wednesday chaired a high-level meeting with officials from the United States Embassy in Islamabad to discuss consular issues, as the Trump administration reviews its visa policies and pushes ahead with deportation of illegal immigrants.

"Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar today chaired a meeting to discuss ongoing collaboration between Pakistan and the US on consular issues with US Charge d'Affaires Natalie A. Baker," the Foreign Office said in a statement.

The meeting was attended by Foreign Secretary Anna Babek, Interior Secretary Khuram Akhtar and other senior officials from the Pakistani side.

The timing and high-level participation in the meeting suggested it was more than a routine discussion on consular matters, particularly as it came amid the US administration's visa policy review following an executive order issued on Jan 28.

An official, speaking on background, said a wide range of consular affairs were discussed and listed that the meeting was initiated by Mr Dar.

Consular issues typically encompass a broad spectrum of services, including passport and visa processing, citizen services, travel advisories, victim assistance, and emergency response.

The consular relationship between Pakistan and the US is shaped by significant ties, including a large Pakistani diaspora in the US, security concerns, and mutual interests in trade, education, and regional stability. Accordingly, the most critical consular issues involve visa processing, immigration, citizen services and travel advisories.

An official confirmed that discussions also covered matters related to returns and readmissions.

"The governments of Pakistan and the United States remain in active collaboration with each other for processing cases of illegal overstayed migrants and their subsequent deportation. This is an ongoing process carried out in

coordination with the Ministry of Interior," FO spokesman Shujaat Ali Khan had said in a previous briefing.

Last month, Pakistan accepted the return of eight nationals who had been staying illegally in the US, marking the first batch under the deportation initiative by the Trump administration. Cracking down on illegal immigration has been a key priority for President Trump, who took immediate steps to enforce stricter policies soon after his inauguration.

At that time, the FO spokesman stated that Pakistan and the US were engaged in talks on the broader repatriation process.

Some observers viewed the rarely publicised consular meeting as a signal of Islamabad's seriousness in addressing US concerns, particularly ahead of a possible travel ban that could impact Pakistan.

However, both the US and Pakistan officials have described such reports as speculative. Those reports had indicated that Pakistan could be given 60 days to address shortcomings to avoid travel restrictions.

S. Africa, Pakistan to deepen defence cooperation

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and South Africa on Wednesday agreed to deepen their defence cooperation, focusing on joint ventures, technology transfer and capacity building.

The understanding was reached during the second meeting of the Pakistan-South Africa Joint Defence Committee (JDC) held in Islamabad from March 17-19.

Defence Secretary retired Lt Gen Muhammad Ali led the Pakistani delegation and Dr Thabekile Gamede, acting secretary of defence, represented South Africa.

Both sides discussed future avenues to strengthen their partnership in defence innovation, cyber and space technologies, artificial intelligence, research and development and defence industry capacity building.

Mr Ali emphasised the importance of broadening cooperation in light of emerging global security challenges. "It is imperative to further expand this collaboration by exploring new avenues through joint ventures in defence innovation and niche technology," he stated.

Dr Gamede conveyed South Africa's keen interest in joint ventures, technology transfer, training exchanges and exploring opportunities for defence industrial cooperation.

The third round of the JDC meeting will be held in South Africa.

A key milestone in the defence cooperation between Pakistan and South Africa came in March 2017, when both countries signed a memorandum of understanding to enhance collaboration in defence production, technology transfer and equipment acquisition. This agreement paved the way for military training exchanges, joint exercises and potential arms trade. — Staff Reporter

UK includes Hasan Nawaz in 'deliberate tax defaulters' list

By Aisha Rehman

LONDON: Almost a year after he was declared bankrupt by a UK court, Hasan Nawaz, the son of former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, was included in a list of "deliberate tax defaulters" by the UK government.

The list, which was published on Tuesday, features the names of scores of individuals and companies that the HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) has issued penalties to for either making deliberate errors in their tax returns or then deliberately failing to comply with their tax obligations.

Hasan Nawaz's name is the second in the list, which appears to be organised in descending order of penalties and tax owed to the UK government. It identifies Hasan Nawaz as a property developer, with listed addresses at Avenfield House as well as 1 Hyde Park Place — the property at the centre of the National Crime Agency's 2019 landmark

£190 million settlement with property tycoon Malik Riaz. Land records show Hasan Nawaz bought the property for £4.2m in 2016, with family sources saying it was sold the same year.

The period of default for Hasan Nawaz is identified as April 6, 2015 to April 5, 2016. He owes £5.1m in taxes, with a penalty of £5.2m.

The UK government's policy of "publishing details of deliberate defaulters" (PDDO) is aimed at reducing the incidence of deliberate defaulting. An individual's name is included on the publication list if their amount of tax default exceeds £25,000.

In a 2018 report, the HMRC noted, "We believe that the possibility of having their details published will deter people from becoming deliberate defaulters." We also believe that it will encourage deliberate defaulters to come forward and pay their tax affairs in order. By coming forward, deliberate defaulters may be able to avoid having their

details published."

Interestingly at the time, the report also said that due to a very limited awareness of publication, PDDO was "not seen as an effective deterrent against defaulting on tax obligations".

"In terms of perceived impact, it was not expected to have any adverse effect on individuals. Some felt it may affect the willingness of people to deal with businesses whose details have been published, if the list and its purpose were more widely publicised," it said.

In April 2024, Hasan Nawaz was declared bankrupt by the High Court of Justice. According to official records, the bankruptcy petition was filed on Aug 25, 2023, by the HMRC over unpaid liabilities. The bankruptcy order was issued on April 29, 2024, following a creditor's petition.

The HMRC, which frequently files such petitions, initiated the action through its Contracts Management Team in Liverpool.

US think tank takes DOGE to court after its offices ransacked

Monitoring Desk

THE United States Institute of Peace (USIP) — an independent nonprofit established by Congress 40 years ago — has asked a US judge to immediately block the Department of Government Efficiency's (DOGE) attempt to forcibly shut the organisation's offices.

According to CNN, a lawsuit filed on Tuesday in the DC district court seeks "the immediate intervention of this Court to stop Defendants from completing the unlawful dismantling of the Institute and preposterously impeding Plaintiff's ability to perform their vital peace promotion and conflict resolution work as tasked by Congress".

The suit was filed after DOGE personnel, accompanied by DC police officers, gained access to the USIP on Monday after being turned away last week. That dramatic escalation followed the Trump administration's gassing of the organisation's board last week.

A declaration filed as part of the lawsuit from the institute's chief security officer alleges that the one USIP employee who "possesses the technological capability to access the infrastructure and to grant others access" was travelling to Washington, DC, "at the behest of DOGE" in order to access the infrastructure and grant access to DOGE as soon as the evening of March 18, 2025.

Another memorandum of support stated that "USIP also has reason to believe that Defendants or those working in concert with them are currently in the USIP building, causing physical damage to the premises and physically accessing and disposing of USIP financial records".

The complaint argues the administration's actions, including alleged destruction and modification of files, are causing "irreparable harm" against USIP. It asks the court to block the "trespass by Defendants against real and personal property belonging to the Institute".

Photos posted to social media platforms showed that the organisation's name and emblem had been removed from its Washington headquarters.

The complaint specifically calls on the court to declare the Trump administration's efforts to shut the USIP board of directors and its acting president "null and void". It asks for an injunction saying that these individuals may not be removed unless the court finds that it complies with the law and gives its "express permission".

However, NBC News quoted White House spokeswoman Anna Kelly as saying that President Trump "signed an executive order to reduce USIP to its statutory minimum" and that "15 board members were lawfully removed" before three board members appointed Jackson acting president of the organisation.

Under the USIP Act, most of the bipartisan board of directors is appointed by the president "with the advice and consent of

the Senate". Last week, the White House said they were terminating most of those members, who include President Donald Trump's former ambassador to Russia. According to the lawsuit, the termination emails from the White House Office of Presidential Personnel "did not state any justification for the purported terminations".

The three remaining members of the board — Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and National Defense University President Peter Garvin — said they were removing the acting president, Amb George Mosse and installing Trump appointee Kenneth Jackson.

USIP, which was established under President Ronald Reagan, employs 414 employees and personal services contractors, is present in 25 countries, and has seven field offices. Its main building is owned by an independent nonprofit corporation and was constructed from "private gifts and contributions," according to the suit.

Release of classified JFK files may lift lid from intel tactics

One newly un-redacted memo details how CIA operatives were posted abroad as "State Dept employees"

TWO sets of documents related to the assassination of US president John F. Kennedy have been released by the Trump administration, giving historians, amateurs and conspiracy theorists another shot at unravelling revelations about the killing that still fascinates America, more than six decades later.

The two batches of documents made public on Tuesday came to about 63,400 pages, according to the National Archives, though it was unclear how many of those files were actually new, or had previously been released in part or in whole, or if there still could be more released later in the week, the New York Times reported.

Officials have said that nearly all government records relating — sometimes very tangentially — to the Kennedy assassination were



In 1992, after the Oliver Stone film *JFK* renewed interest in conspiracy theories about the assassination, Congress ordered that all records relating to the death of President Kennedy be gathered in one place. — Reuters

already public, NYT estimates this might be one of the last releases of the Kennedy papers, considering that only about 1 per cent of the six million pages in the government's possession remain undisclosed.

The latest records were released through an executive order signed

by President Donald Trump in January. That order also directed the nation's security agencies to disclose any remaining documents related to the assassinations of Senator Robert F. Kennedy and Dr Martin Luther King Jr in 1968.

The new documents are not pub-

lished in any organised fashion, and clicking any file on the National Archives website can feel like opening a box of messy, unsorted papers, wrote NYT's Tanya Mnulich.

Some files are one page and fairly straightforward. Others are almost 700 pages and stuffed with handwritten notes, diplomatic cables and images, while some documents are completely illegible.

Some may turn out to be full versions of documents previously available with only light redactions, adding a mangle or two to the record. Others, scholars say, are likely to be duplicates or variants of memos and reports that have long been available from other sources.

Although experts don't really expect to find any bombshells, that doesn't mean there won't be interesting details, particularly for scholars of the workings of intelligence agencies.

For example, as NYT's Isabelle Telf noted, it's no secret that the CIA has long played agents undercover as State Department officials.

But a newly unredacted portion of a 1961 memo to President Kennedy describes how the agency had placed about 1,500 agents overseas

as State Department employees.

The aide who authored the memo, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., wrote that the practice, which was originally meant to be temporary and limited, was threatening the State Department's control of foreign policy.

"In the Paris Embassy today, there are 128 CIA people," Schlesinger wrote to Kennedy. "CIA occupies the top floor of the Paris Embassy, a fact well known locally; and on the night of the General's revolt in Algeria, passers-by noted with amazement that the top floor was ablaze with lights."

Daniel Akorn, president of the Assassination Archives and Research Center — the largest private collection of material related to the Kennedy assassination — speculated that the newly released portion of Schlesinger's memo to Kennedy about the practice had long been redacted because it confirmed the CIA's cover arrangements.

"I guess they consider that a matter of secrecy," he said. "They really just didn't want the embarrassment or the negative attention."

The release, so far, appears to contain little new information about the JFK assassination, and signifi-

cantly less about the killing of Dr Martin Luther King Jr.

Only a few dozen PDFs of the 1,323 initially released refer to King. Some describe investigations into his murder, which happened at a Memphis hotel on April 4, 1968.

The details, several of which appear to have been previously disclosed, mention that sources in Mexico City and Nigeria believed they had seen someone who resembled King's assassin, James Earl Ray.

The documents also describe the two American citizens who were detained in Panama City in connection with the murder but ultimately were not charged.

A Berkeley physician also came under suspicion, having been "a chronic letter writer to the CIA criticizing them and the government," according to one memo in the tranche.

The documents reflect both the FBI's and the CIA's known fixation on Dr King and his association with leftwing activists, which came at a time when J. Edgar Hoover, the director of the FBI, was trying to undermine the civil rights movement. — Monitoring Desk

SPORT

'Hurting' NZ determined to reach 2026 World Cup, says coach

WELLINGTON: New Zealand's players are carrying the hurt of failing to qualify for three straight World Cups and that pain should help them beat Fiji on route to the 2026 finals, coach Darren Barneley said.

The All Whites were previously defeated in the intercontinental playoffs but should sail into the expanded 48-team event in North America as Oceania's dominant team.

They play Fiji in the Oceania semi-finals in Wellington on Friday, with the winner to play either New Caledonia or Tahiti next week for a direct ticket to 2026.

"Obviously, those inter-continental games were big games, big moments," Englishman Barneley told reporters on Wednesday.

"What we have now is a lot of players who experienced the hurt of not qualifying, whether that was [against] Mexico, Peru or Costa Rica, and it hurts, the players are hurting."

"Some of the players know that they missed out on these moments, so that makes it more challenging for Fiji, knowing that we have a team that won't be complacent. They are ready and know they have this opportunity in front of them, and they are ready to take it. It's a team a while since we went to the World Cup and we are determined to go back there."

New Zealand have been to the World Cup twice, in 1982 and 2006, but are yet to win a game on the biggest stage of all.

The semi-final is a huge mismatch on paper at least, with world number 89 New Zealand playing a 14th-ranked side of amateur footballers. Barneley said it was difficult for the players to avoid getting caught up in expectations but backed them to do the job.

"We know that we're the favourites with the squad that we have but we also know it's a game of football — We're expecting a good, tough game."

Captain Chris Wood, the only player in the squad to play in a World Cup (last time New Zealand qualified, will be a focal point up front having scored 28 goals for Nottingham Forest in the Premier League this season.

Wood called the upcoming matches "massive for us as a nation".

"These hardships that you go through drive you on for bigger and better things, and that's what this moment has in time," said the striker. "We've got a chance on Friday to do something great and I do believe Oceania should have automatic entry to the World Cup after a long time ago. This is truly a fair way of doing it and our consideration should be represented in some sort of way."

Barneley said it was up to Wood's team mates to give him the same service he has enjoyed at Forest.

"What Chris is doing is amazing. Scoring goals at the highest level in the toughest league in the world — and consistently — is great," added the coach. "We've got some good players in the squad that are up for that challenge and they want to also supply good service for Chris to score goals."

—Agencies



SYDNEY: Australian players attend a training session at the Allianz Stadium on Wednesday. —AFP

Japan look to become first team to qualify for 2026 World Cup

HONG KONG: Japan will become the first nation to qualify for the 2026 World Cup on Thursday if they defeat Bahrain at Suksama Stadium as Hajime Moriyasu's side look to continue their impressive form in Asia's preliminaries.

Asian nations play two rounds of games, on Thursday and Tuesday, as qualifying for the expanded 48-team tournament in North America approaches the business end in the region.

Three points would guarantee Japan a top-two finish in Group 'C' and see them join co-hosts the United States, Canada and Mexico at next year's finals.

The Japanese have dropped only two points from their six qualifiers — a 1-1 draw with Australia in October — and are 10 points ahead of third-placed Indonesia with four games left. A draw could also be enough if other results in the group go their way.

Even if they stumble, it looks only a matter of time until they secure a place in the World Cup, as they have another home match against Saudi Arabia next week.

Captain Wataru Endo said qualification is just the start for a team that hope to make a splash at next summer's competition.

"Everyone understands that the third round of Asian qualifiers is not easy but we are aiming higher and not one of us is satisfied at this point," the Liverpool midfielder told reporters on Wednesday. "It's because we have the targets that we do that this team has become what it is now."

While Japan are sitting pretty with four matches to play but the five-way battle to qualify second from the group could go to the wire.

Australia have seven points, while Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and China all have six.

The Koreans, who are without several players through injury, on Thursday host an

Indonesia side in Sydney led for the first time by Barcelona and Dutch great Patrick Kluivert.

Indonesia have leaned heavily on the Netherlands as they look to reach the World Cup for the first time since the Asian nation gained independence from the Dutch in 1945.

With many of his players flying in from their clubs in Europe, Kluivert — headed the mission of taking Indonesia to the World Cup finals for the first time since 1938 — admitted that there had not been enough time to really impose his ideas on the squad but said he was confident they were ready to challenge for a first win over Australia since 1981.

"Changing is impossible at the moment," he told reporters at Sydney Football Stadium on Wednesday. "But of course, there's things I don't just explain here, but there will be some, some things change, but that's between us. I think the team is ready. They know what we expect tomorrow, so we look forward to playing the match."

China are bottom of the six sides in the group and face Saudi Arabia in Riyadh. After the Saudi game, China host Australia on Tuesday in another crucial showdown.

Seyker Zhang Yuning said China will be driven by a sense of revenge after a 2-1 home defeat to the Saudis earlier in qualifying.

"Everyone is looking forward to a very exciting match, especially because the home match was disappointing," Zhang told reporters. "We will fight hard from the first minute because now we have the belief that we can win."

SON AIMS TO FORGET SPURS WORRY

Personal qualifiers South Korea are on the verge of advancing from Group 'B', with Hong Myung-sik's side needing to defeat Oman in Gwangju on Thursday and then pick up another positive result against Jordan to

book their spot.

The South Koreans have 14 points from their six qualifiers, three ahead of second-placed Iraq, with Jordan in third a further two points adrift.

Son Heung-min dismissed concerns about his form and fitness on Wednesday as he looks to forget his Tottenham Hotspur woes by firing South Korea to the World Cup.

Previously one of the first names on the Tottenham team-sheet, the 32-year-old forward has struggled in the Premier League this season, scoring seven times for Spurs, with the London club languishing in the bottom half of the table.

Speaking to reporters on the eve of their qualifier against Oman, South Korea's captain admitted to some "difficult and challenging" moments with Tottenham. But he added: "My physical condition is perfectly fine."

As in the group, Iraq, who are looking to qualify for the finals for the first time since 1986, host fifth-placed Kuwait in Basra while Palestine take on Jordan in Amman.

Iran can also close in on a place in the finals when they host the United Arab Emirates in Tehran in Group 'A'.

Amir Ghaderlou's team top the standings from Uzbekistan by three points while sitting a further three ahead of the UAE.

Uzbekistan, chasing their first-ever appearance at a World Cup, host Kyrgyzstan in Tashkent while fourth-placed Qatar entertain North Korea needing a win to maintain their chances of automatic qualification.

Even if Qatar, who won the Asian Cup on home soil 13 months ago, finish outside the top two, their World Cup hopes will not be over.

The teams that finish third and fourth in the three groups go through to a further round of qualifying. —Agencies

Usama, Imam, Saud and Awaish shine in National T20 Cup

LAHORE: Faisalabad Region, Hyderabad Region, Islamabad Region, Karachi Region Whites, Multan Region and Sialkot Region won their respective matches of the National T20 Cup at different venues on Tuesday.

Karachi Whites beat Lahore Blues by 37 runs in a Group 'B' match courtesy captain Saad Shafeeq's 73 and a four-wicket haul by Arif Yaqoob at the Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore.

Left-hander Saad's 52-ball 73 faced with eight fours and three sixes, his second half-century, scored Karachi Whites to a solid 171-5 in the stipulated 20 overs after they were asked to bat first.

In their chase, Lahore Blues lost wickets at regular intervals after opening batsmen Umar Siddiq (24 off 14 balls) and Fakir Azam (22 off 12) gave them a 37-run start.

Qasim Akram top-scored for Lahore with a 28-ball 36 after walking in to bat at 42-3.

For Karachi Whites, Arif (4-23) and Danish Aze (2-28) shared as Lahore Blues slipped to 101-6 before getting dismissed for 134 in 18.5 overs. Saad earned the man-of-the-match award.

In the second Group 'B' fixture of the day, Deen Mural Jammu Region suffered a 68-run loss at the hands of Islamabad Region.

After electing to bat first, Islamabad totalled a huge 184-7 thanks to a fine half-century by skipper Rishad Niaz (58 off 43) and opener Naveedullah Khan's 32-ball 41. In response, DMJ could only manage 116-6 after they slipped to 58-6. Arsal Sheikh, who was later named player-of-the-match, claimed three wickets for 14 runs.

Meanwhile, Mohammad Azeem Zafar's aggressive half-century helped Faisalabad Region beat Rawalpindi Region by 24 runs in their Group 'C' game at the Iqbal Stadium, Faisalabad.

After electing to bat first, Faisalabad made a huge 207-3 in the allotted overs. Azeem's unbeaten 87 off 55 balls with the help of six sixes and as many fours enabled his team to make a huge total.

Azeem added 103 runs with Rameez Ahmed (53 off 38, six fours) for the third wicket.

In reply, Rawalpindi lost their openers for just 11 before Mubassar Khan's 24-ball 44 took them to 79-3. They further slipped to 119-7 when Mubassar cracked the joint fastest half-century (54 off 24, seven fours, two sixes) of the ongoing event.

For Faisalabad, Mubassar Qamar dismissed three batsmen while conceding 25 runs. Azeem earned the man-of-the-match honours.

In another Group 'C' encounter, Hyderabad Region comfortably chased a modest 128-run target against Islamabad Region for the loss of only three wickets at the Iqbal Stadium.

After opting to bat first, Islamabad got off to a fine 48-run start through Shahzad Khan (31 off 20) and Sajjad Ali Hashmi (29 off 32) but collapsed losing all the wickets for the addition of just 79 runs.

Man-of-the-match Kashif Bhutta (3-16), Majid Anghar (3-25) and Jawad Ali (3-20) were the main wicket-takers for Hyderabad.

Saad Khan (43 off 26), Ubaishah (36) and Mohammad Azeem Ghossein (34 not out) were main contributors as Hyderabad overhauled the target in just 14.5 overs.

Skipper Imran-ul-Haq smashed an attacking 79 while Sharmeen Siraj displayed a fine all-round performance as Multan overcame And Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) by five wickets in a Group 'D' fixture at the LCC/A Ground, Lahore.

Imran's reflexive knock came off just 46 balls and contained 10 fours and a couple of sixes. Player-of-the-match Sharmeen's 39 off 26 and a three-wicket haul for 10 runs handed Multan their first win of the tournament.

Earlier, Sharmeen Maroof made a 22-ball 40 as AJK posted 164-8 after choosing to bat first.

In another Group 'D' game, Sialkot Region outplayed Fata by three wickets at the LCC/A Ground.

The decision to field first proved correct for Sialkot who bowled out Fata for a mere 107 in 18.1 overs. Hassan Ali (3-16), Usama Mir (3-19) and Ahsan Hafeez Bhutta (2-18) were the primary wicket-takers. Sialkot reached the target in 14.2 overs.

Openers Mirza Tahir Baig (37) and Mohammad Hossain (32 not out) were the main contributors.

Usama earned the player-of-the-match award. —Agencies

Ruthe becomes youngest to run a sub-four minute mile

AUCKLAND: New Zealand's Sam Ruthe has made history by becoming the youngest athlete and the first 15-year-old to run a mile in under four minutes, breaking the record by two seconds on Wednesday at Mt. Smart Stadium in Auckland.

The middle-distance prodigy completed the race in a record three minutes and 58.35 seconds, with pacemakers Sam Tanner and Ben Wall also finishing within the four-minute mark.

"This was probably my favourite goal that I've reached. I've definitely enjoyed this one the most, with all the people here supporting me," Ruthe said.

"This has been the most set up for me, so I'm really happy to have gotten this one."

Ruthe, who celebrated the record-breaking feat 24 days short of his 16th birthday, beat his previous best time of four minutes and 1.72 seconds, which he achieved at the Cooks Classic in Whangarei in January.

Norway's Jakob Ingebrigtsen, a two-time Olympic champion and holder of three world records, ran the race in 3:58.07 at the age of 16, while Australia's Cam Myers holds the current best time for a 16-year-old at 3:55.44. —Reuters

Osaka survives first-round scare in Miami

MIAMI: Four-time Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka rallied to beat Ukrainian qualifier Yulia Starodubtseva 3-6, 6-4, 6-3 on Tuesday to reach the second round of the Miami Open.

The Japanese star captured her first match win since she reached the third round of the Australian Open — where she retired with an abdominal injury while trailing Belinda Bencic.

Osaka bounced back from a first-round loss to Camilla Giorgis at Indian Wells, a match she called the "worst match I've ever played in my life".

She said on Tuesday she'd learned from that disappointing

performance. "[In Indian Wells] I was just over-hitting a lot, so I tried to use my legs," she said in her on-court interview.

"I was going to run into every corner if I had to, and we were going to have to play for three hours if she was going to beat me."

In fact, Osaka polished off the victory in two hours and 28 minutes, battling back after dropping the first five games.

Starodubtseva led 4-2 in the second set, but Osaka's 10-aces helped her recover and she was in control in the third set to launch her bid for a first title in the city she considers

her US home. She was runner-up to Iga Swiatek in 2022 in her best Miami Open finish.

Osaka next faces 24th seed Людмила Самсонова. The 27-year-old is still trying to return to peak form after returning from a 15-month break last year after giving birth to daughter Shui in 2023.

Her year got off to a promising start when she reached her first final since 2022 in Auckland, but she withdrew with an abdominal injury while leading that match and was later forced out in Melbourne.

In other first-round action, Sofia Kenin beat Petra Kvitová 6-4, 7-5 in a battle of former Grand Slam

champions.

Kenin the 2020 Australian Open winner, booked an all-American second-round meeting with world number three Coco Gauff, the 2023 US Open champion who is coming off a fourth-round exit at Indian Wells.

Kenin, a two-time Wimbledon champion who won the Miami Open in 2023, is still seeking her first match win since returning to action in February, a little more than seven months after giving birth to son Petr last July.

She had stepped away from the game due to her pregnancy on New Year's Day 2024. —AFP



YULIA Starodubtseva of Ukraine returns a shot against Japan's Naomi Osaka during their Miami Open first-round match at the Hard Rock Stadium. —AFP

IOC presidency race heats up on Greece's sunlit shores

PTLOE (Greece) The slow-burn race for the most powerful job in world sport moved into its final week on Wednesday, set against the dazzling backdrop of the Ionian Sea, where the seven contenders for the International Olympic Committee presidency made their final moves ahead of a vote that will shape the sporting landscape for the next decade.

Behind the gilded facades and five-star hospitality of the Costa Navarino resort in Greece's southeastern Peloponnese, whippersnappers of alliances and voting tactics twirled as IOC members met for the 144th Session, the last with Thomas Bach at the wheel.

The winner of the presidential election will lead the world's wealthiest multi-sports organisation with revenues of about \$7 billion per four-year cycle.

With the Mediterranean breeze carrying hints of salt and ambition, the seven seeking to replace Bach had to navigate a gauntlet of flashing cameras and microphones as they were ushered to lunch on a terrace overlooking the sea.

"I'm still here," quipped Britain's Sebastian Coe, considered one of the frontrunners, as he walked briskly past the bank of reporters, flashing a smile but making no further comment.

Kirsty Coventry, considered another frontrunner and believed to be Bach's preferred candidate, was similarly circumspect, stopping only to make one brief comment to German media before the Zimbabwean headed to the terrace.

Coventry, a swimming great who has contributed seven of Zimbabwe's eight Olympic medals in history, would be the first woman and first African to head the IOC and at 41 the youngest ever president.

"I'm excited," she said. "I think it's the athlete spirit kicking back in with all the adrenaline and that final strength of the last 200 metres, that 25 metres. I am just staying focused and staying in my lane."

Last to leave the Session Hall was Spain's Juan Antonio Samaranch Jr, son of the IOC's seventh president who led the body from 1980 to 2001.

"It's very easy in this [Olympic] world, so close, to confuse a smile for a vote, a friendship for a vote, a nice word for a vote," smiled the Spaniard when asked how he felt the race was going. "We all have to be very careful in making that translation."

"It's a very good system. All the IOC members have one thing which is extraordinarily precious, which is a vote and its confidentiality. That gives each one of us the full independence to decide whatever we think is better. And that we will only know, it's only possible to know when the real votes are cast. So we will see."

CHINA LINKS

Samaranch Jr, 65, dismissed suggestions that it was unfair two Chinese members who sit on a foundation board with the Spaniard could vote for him.

If he is successful on Thursday, he would make history in following in the footsteps of his father of the same name, who led the IOC from 1980 to 2001.

Two Chinese IOC members, Yu Zhenyong and Li Lingwei, are on the board of the Juan Antonio Samaranch Foundation, which is based in China

and aims to promote political and economic opportunities between the country and Spain.

Though they are free to vote for the Spaniard, members from the same country cannot vote for a candidate.

Samaranch Jr, who like the two other favourites Coe and Coventry have been subjected to personal attacks — some most infamously in the past week, said he saw nothing improper about the voting rules.

"The foundation was created more than 12 years ago and it's a Chinese foundation that carries my family name," Samaranch said. "It's within the rules and I wish it would be an advantage, but I don't think that it's going to be the case."

French candidate David Lippart, head of the world cycling federation, insisted the race was wide open, and that he expects multiple rounds of voting before a decisive winner emerges.

With just over 100 ballots set to be cast at the Greek seaside resort the winner will need an outright majority. If nobody secures a majority, the least score is used, triggering another round of voting until one candidate emerges victorious.

"In the race, still in the race," Lippart smiled, before leaning on a cycling analogy. "I think that it's riding fast, but I'm still in the first part of the bunch. I've not been dropped from the bunch, so I will believe it's possible. I respect my fellow colleagues, also candidates, but I think I'm one of the potential options to be the winner tomorrow."

GLOBAL COMMUNITY

Other candidates John Eliass and Marius Watanabe would not speculate.

Japanese Watanabe, head of the world gymnastics federation, smiled and simply said: "I am waiting."

His federation chief Eliass said the electorate of 100-plus members realised how big a decision they faced given the turbulent geopolitical situation.

"I mean, every moment is going to be pivotal because we are 1,000 years old," he said. "The membership takes this election very seriously, and the various implications that this choice will have for the future of the movement."

"So in my case, my mission is accomplished if I've been able to positively contribute to the movement through this campaign process. I am sure the outcome will be a good one we have seven good candidates."

Prince Faisal Al Hussein, a rank outsider in the race, cut a dignified figure at the 41-year-old Jordanian declared: "I am in it to win it."

"The key for me is the issue of integrity," he said. "A lot of growth in the world have lost trust in global institutions, and whether we like it or not, the IOC is a global institution."

"How do we regain the trust of both athletes, of fans, and more importantly also from the safeguarding of parents? We need to make sports accessible, we need to make it fun, we need to make people feel that this is contributing to their development."

"I have spoken to more members in the last 3-4 months than in the last 4 years, and that for me has been the great takeaway of this engagement. This is a global community and we should see that for our advantage." — Agencies



JEIST Netherlands players attend a training session at the KNVB Campus on Wednesday. The Dutch host defending champions Spain in the first leg of their UEFA Nations League quarter-final in Rotterdam on Thursday with the return in Valencia on Sunday. A semi-final spot against either Croatia or France is on the line with the first leg of that tie in split on Thursday. On the other side of the bracket, Portugal take on Denmark on Thursday in Copenhagen and at home in Lisbon on Sunday Germany and Italy clash in the other quarter-final, with the winners not only advancing to the last four but also confirming their status as hosts of the Nations League finals. Germany travel to Italy for the first leg at Milan's San Siro on Thursday, before the reverse fixture takes place three days later at Westfalenstadion in Dortmund. — AFP

Abdullah wary of tough batting conditions ahead of New Zealand ODIs

By Our Sports Reporter

LAHORE Pakistan opener Abdullah Shafique, who is set to make a comeback to the national three-day international side, after missing the recent ICC Champions Trophy, has acknowledged that the upcoming series against New Zealand will be held in tough playing conditions.

The right-hander, however, emphasised that despite being a young side, Pakistan will give their best effort in the three-match series against the Black Caps, which starts from March 29.

Speaking to reporters on the first day of a short preparatory camp at the LCCA ground here, Abdullah, who had been dropped from recent back-to-back events including the tri-nation series and the Champions Trophy due to a post-run in the preceding tour of South Africa, admitted the fans were disappointed with the team's recent performances. He, however, reassured that the team would strive to improve, despite the challenges posed by the New Zealand conditions.

"The playing conditions in New Zealand are never easy, especially for Asian teams," he said. "The bouncy pitches often make a significant difference, and we will focus on this aspect during the camp to adapt accordingly."

Abdullah, 25, has represented Pakistan in 22 Test matches, amassing 1,504 runs at an average of 38.36, including five centuries, one of which was a double century, and five half-centuries. In ODIs, he has played 21 matches, scoring 412 runs at an average of 32.21, with one century and six fifties. His performance in T20s, however, has been underwhelming, having scored just 54 runs in six matches.



PAKISTAN batter Abdullah Shafique in action during a practice session at the LCCA Ground on Wednesday. — courtesy PCB

When asked about his versatility across formats, Abdullah said he wanted to be remembered as an all-format player.

"It's not ideal for a cricketer to be labelled as suitable for only one format," the 25-year-old batter noted. "A player should be ready

and available for all formats of the game."

Reflecting on his recent struggles, Abdullah acknowledged that poor patches were a part of every player's journey.

"The key is to come out of these bad patches quickly by addressing the mistakes," he said. "I played in the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy, worked on my flaws, and now, I'm hopeful of performing to the best of my ability and meeting the national team's expectations."

Commenting on his relationship with former captain Babar Azam, Abdullah expressed that being rated highly by Babar boosted his confidence. "Babar's support gives me a lot of confidence and motivates me to play impactful knocks that can lead to victories for the team," he observed.

Abdullah also stressed the importance of taking criticism positively, especially when the team fails to secure a win.

"Criticism is a natural part of cricket, but it's essential to accept it and use it as a tool for improvement," he added.

Abdullah highlighted the importance of Saïm Ayub's inclusion in the national squad, suggesting that the opener's addition would benefit the team.

The opener admitted that his past performances had not been up to the required standard for the team's success.

"There were times when the team's strike rate was low, but that's in the past now," Abdullah admitted. "We are focused on improving in that crucial department, especially in New Zealand."

After a disappointing performance in the Champions Trophy, Pakistan are currently engaged in a five-match T20I series against New Zealand. The team has lost both of the first two matches by significant margins.

Pakistan to depart for Asian Cup qualifier today

By Our Sports Reporter

LAHORE The Pakistan football team is set to depart for Dammam, Saudi Arabia, on Thursday ahead of their first match in the AFC Asian Cup qualifier, where they will face Syria on March 25. The match will be held at a neutral venue in Dammam, as his visa for Pakistan was not issued in time.

The 27-member squad consists of 17 players and officials departing from Lahore, with 10 foreign-based Pakistan footballers sched-

uled to join the team in Dammam. Initially, the NC had planned to hold the training camp in Dammam, but due to delays in visa processing, the camp was moved to Lahore. The captain of the team will be announced by Constantine once the team arrives in Dammam.

Pakistan's opening match against Syria will take place on March 25 at the Prince Abdullah bin Jalawi Stadium in Al-Ahsa. The national team is placed in Group E alongside Syria, Afghanistan, and Myanmar.

Squad: Goalkeepers: Abdul Basit, Muhammad Ahsan Yousuf

Adam Nageeb, Younis Jafar, Saqib Hameed, Defenders: Abdul Rehman, Abdullah Iqbal, Fawaz Salamun, Hameed Ahmad Khan, Javed Ahmad Shah, Munoon Moosa Khan, Mohammed Fawaz, Waqar Usman, Midfielders: Aamir Ali Khan, Ali Usair Mahmood, Ali Zafar, M. Umar Hayat, Rahn Nahi, Taseer ul-Hassan, Usair Ali, Moiz Ahmed, Forwards: Farooqullah, Harun Hamid, Imran Shahid Kayani, Mokeel Azeem, Abdullah, Abdul Samad Shahzad, Shorah Dhan, Muhammad Ahsan Yousuf

Goalkeepers: Abdul Basit, Muhammad Ahsan Yousuf



PTLOE (From L) Candidate to the presidency of the International Olympic Committee Prince Faisal Al Hussein, IOC member Kirstin Klover and Kirsty Coventry, another presidential candidate, are seen during the 144th IOC session on Wednesday. — AFP

Algerian boxer Khelif 'not intimidated' by Trump

LONDON Algerian Olympic boxing champion Imen Khelif, at the centre of a gender row at the Paris Games, is targeting a second gold in Los Angeles and says she will not be intimidated by Donald Trump.

The US president last month signed an executive order banning transgender women from competing in the female categories of sports.

Trump had previously said the 25-year-old fighter had transitioned from being a man, even though that is not the case.

"I will give you a straight forward answer — the US

president issued a decision related to transgender policies in America," she told Britain's ITV News.

"I am not transgender. This does not concern me, and it does not intimidate me. That is my response."

Olympic chiefs earlier this week recommended that boxing be included at the 2028 Games in LA after a new governing body was provisionally recognised.

The decision still needs to be rubber-stamped by a full session of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) this week in Greece.

"Second gold medal, of

course," said Khelif. "In America, Los Angeles," she added. "This experience has taught me a lot. I believe that if the old games operated at 50 per cent of her potential, then the Imen Khelif of today is even more motivated and determined."

"I have learned so much from this campaign against me, and what happened at the Paris Olympics was an eye-opening experience. I feel even stronger now than I was before."

Khelif's triumph in Paris, along with that of Taiwan's Lin Yuting, sparked a raging gender eligibility debate, with

high-profile figures such as Trump and Elon Musk weighing in.

She revealed she was "deeply affected mentally" by the "major media campaign" surrounding her, and said her mother was attending hospital almost daily as her family shared the brunt of the attacks.

Khelif and Lin were disqualified from the International Boxing Association's 2023 world championships after the organisation, the long-standing governing body of amateur boxing, said they had failed gender eligibility tests.

The IBF has severed links with the IBA over financial,

governance and ethical concerns. The IBA is led by the Kremlin-linked Russian Umar Kremlev.

Last month the IOC provisionally recognised World Boxing as the body to oversee the sport at future Games.

"As we say in Algeria, those who have nothing to hide should have no fear," Khelif told ITV. "The truth became clear at the Paris Olympics — the injustice was exposed and later, the truth was acknowledged by the Olympic Committee in Paris."

She added: "For me, I see myself as a girl, just like any other girl. I was born a girl, raised as

a girl, and have lived my entire life as one."

"I have competed in many tournaments, including the Tokyo Olympics and other major competitions, as well as four world championships."

"All of these took place before I started winning and earning titles. But once I began achieving success, the campaigns against me started."

The debate over transgender athletes and athletes with differences in sex development (DSD) in women's sport has been a central issue in the ongoing IOC presidential race, which concludes on Thursday. The three leading candi-

dates — Juan Antonio Samaranch Junior, Sebastian Coe and Kirsty Coventry — have spoken of the need to "protect the women's category."

World Athletics president Coe told AFP in an interview last year: "If we do not protect women's sport and we don't have a clear and unambiguous set of policies to do that, then we run the risk of losing women's sport."

Khelif said: "I hope the next president of the IOC leads with true sportsmanship, stays committed to Olympic principles, and upholds the values of fair play." — AFP

KARACHI

Sunset 06:43 pm
Sunrise (Tomorrow) 06:35 am

NEXT 24 HRS

Minimum 20°C
Maximum 33°C
Humidity 65%
Outlook Sunny

METRO South

KARACHI RAMAZAN TIMING	
WISHLAMANA	WISHLAMANA
Thu (today)	Thu (today)
5:44pm	5:56pm
Fri (Tomorrow)	Fri (Tomorrow)
5:16am	5:13am

SHC rejects residents' plea against toll tax collection

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court (SHC) on Wednesday dismissed a petition filed by some residents of Bahria Town Karachi (BTK) against the collection of toll tax for being misconceived.

The petitioners had approached the SHC in 2021 and asserted that they have to pay toll tax on entry and exit every time they visited the city and pleaded to direct the relevant authorities to stop receiving toll tax from the residents of BTK.

The counsel for petitioners contended that collection of toll tax from the petitioners was in violation of a consent agreement signed in 2015 and Article 15 of the Constitution. The petitioners had also asked for relocation of a toll station on the M-9 Motorway.

Initially, the SHC had passed an interim restraining order for collecting such tax not just from the petitioners but from all vehicles of residents of BTK and visitors thereto.

A two-judge constitutional bench of SHC headed by Justice Agha Faisal said irrespective of the fact that the agreement was a contract and enforcement of contractual rights was not amenable to writ jurisdiction, the agreement was signed between National Highway Authority and a private firm and the petitioners were not party thereto.

"No locus standi of the petitioners could be demonstrated before us, hence, no case is made out to toll the tax within the meaning of aggrieved persons, as envisaged per Article 199 of the Constitution", it added.

The Article 15 unshies protection for freedom of movement and under no stretch of imagination could the levy/collection of toll, in the present facts and circumstances, be demonstrated to infringe thereupon, it said and added that the petition was found to be misconceived.



MOTORISTS turn on their headlights during daytime as they pass through the unlit Nazimabad underpass, on Wednesday. The subterranean passage is dangerous and accident-prone due to a lack of illumination. —FPF

Experts reject new canals, suggest alternatives to irrigate Cholistan

• Water underneath Sutlej can irrigate entire desert region, says Dr Hassan Abbas

• 'N' League for complicity in approving controversial scheme

By Waqas Ali Raza

KARACHI: Hydrology and water resources experts, rights activists and environmentalists have opposed the plan to build canals on the Indus River and suggested alternative solutions to ensure that Pakistan's agriculture sector gets modernised without trampling on farmers' rights and harming the natural flow of Indus and its ecology.

They were speaking at a seminar, "The Water Crisis and Six Canals Dispute: Need for Equitable and Effective Solutions", organised by the Concerned Citizens Alliance (CCA) at the Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) House here on Wednesday. The event was moderated by member CCA Tahseen Fatima.

Speaking on the occasion, hydrology and water resources expert Dr Hassan Abbas said that at present it was important to see how Pakistan could be in a win-win situation by

ensuring the "Green Pakistan Initiative" without impacting the Indus River and farmers of Sindh, particularly the lower riparian regions.

"First it needs to be clearly understood whether corporate farming can be successfully and feasibly done in a desert."

He said the amount of sand and mud is quite a lot in the Indus and, therefore, the canals water would require desalting on a large scale and huge ponds would also be needed for that. However, Dr Abbas added the desalting capacity of such a level was very difficult to ensure.

Similarly, he spoke of a number of other technical problems in the canals project, which, he believed, make the entire plan unfeasible and unrealistic, like, for example land levelling, left-out silt, etc.

Therefore, he suggested an alternative solution based on a study conducted by some Pakistani and American experts, which recommended that instead of canals, the river bank filtration system with "horizontal collector wells" should be used to transport water to Cholistan.

That, he said, should be done through pipelines.

Dr Abbas said Sutlej River has a huge quantity of reserve water under its bed which is enough to irrigate entire Cholistan. It is pertinent to mention here that Sutlej is the nearest river to the Cholistan region.

"Moreover, that scheme would cost half the money compared to the expenses of canals and the duration would also be very less along with multiple other benefits, which

are not there in the canals project." Doing that would lead to a win-win situation, the water expert added.

Dr Abbas stressed that the country needed such modern agriculture plans, not the century-old concepts of making more canals.

"Not issue of Sindhi nationalism alone"

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Jr, social and political activist and grandson of former prime minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, said the issue of six canals is not only an issue of Sindhi nationalism.

"It is rather an issue of patriotism as it is a problem affecting the whole country. The fight for the river is the fight for the rights of the poor," he added.

He also questioned the authority of the governments to control and divert the natural flow and order of rivers.

Moreover, Mr Bhutto said the Pakistan Peoples Party and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz were complicit in the approval of six canals project.

He said he rejected the very idea of farming for profit, "Corporate farming," he added, "has not benefited the country in any significant way."

He believed that there should rather be "cooperative farming" among farmers.

Civil rights lawyer Shafiq Uddin said people in the country have lost hope in the government as well as the judiciary and that there is insecurity among the public that

Continued on Page 14

Sindh Assembly's pre-budget debate drags on amid lawmakers' disinterest

19 opposition, treasury members take part in debate

By Tahir Siddiqui

KARACHI: Amid persistent disinterest and apathy by the lawmakers, the Sindh Assembly on Wednesday continued pre-budget debate for the third consecutive day with as many as 19 more members delivering their speeches.

Only four opposition members and 10 treasury members were present in the house when the deputy speaker began the proceeding with a delay of only five minutes.

Later, the number of lawmakers on the two sides of the aisle rose to over 50 in a 108-member house when four members had already participated in the pre-budget discussion.

The members from the both sides complained of water shortage in their respective areas and demanded smooth water supply. They also showed concern over poor condition of sewerage system and road infrastructure in their respective areas.

The members belonging to the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-backed Sunni Ittehad Council came down heavily on the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP)-led provincial government and said that people's problems

had not been solved, while the PPP had been in power for the past 17 years.

PPP member Yasmin Shah said that the steps taken by the provincial government for the betterment of the people were not hidden and added that progress had been made in every sector including health, education, roads and agriculture.

She demanded the establishment of a medical college and order colleges in districts.

Taj Muhammad Malik strongly condemned the river canals projects and said that the people of Badin were worried about every drop of water.

MQM-P's Arsalan Perwaiz said that the civil and road infrastructure had been ruined in his constituency PS-58 due to

the incompetence of the provincial government.

He said that Karachi contributes seventy percent to the country's economy but the city is ignored in development projects.

The MQM-P member said that the sewage system and roads in Karachi have been destroyed. He demanded immediate rehabilitation of the civil and road infrastructure.

Lauding the achievements of the provincial government, PPP's Seema Khuram said that institutions like the National Institute of Cardiovascular Diseases (NICVD) and Sindh Institute of Urology and Transplantation (SIUT)

Continued on Page 14

Young man shot dead by robbers in Korangi

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI: A young man was shot dead by robbers in Korangi on Wednesday morning, police and rescuers said.

Zaman Town SHO Azeem Rehman said 22-year-old Sohail Javed was shot and killed at his medical store in Korangi No 6.

The police said that at around 12:30am two armed men on a motorcycle arrived at Sohail's medical store for robbery. However, area people sensed danger and raised alarm to which one of the muggers opened fire, snatched cash from Sohail and rode away with his accomplice.

Sohail suffered a critical bullet wound and was taken to the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC), where doctors declared him dead on arrival.

The body was handed over to the family after completing medico-legal formalities.

A case has been registered against two robbers on the complaint of victim's father Javed Hussain under Sections 302 (premeditated murder), 397 (robbery) and 34 (common intention) of the Pakistan Penal Code.

Wounded guard dies

A private security guard, who was shot and wounded by robbers on March 17 in Korangi, died at a local hospital during treatment, police said.

On Monday, a trader, accompanied by security guard Amir Ahmed, 35, and two others, was driving towards a bank to deposit Rs2.5 million when three armed men, also travelling in a car, intercepted their vehicle, shot the guard, snatched the cash and fled.

The guard suffered a bullet wound in the head and was shifted to the JPMC, where he died on Tuesday night.



Pakistan, Russia hold Arabian Monsoon VI naval exercise

By Our Staff Reporter

KARACHI: The navies of Pakistan and Russian Federation have conducted the bilateral maritime exercise Arabian Monsoon VI in the Arabian Sea.

According to a press release issued on Wednesday, various Pakistan Navy (PN) assets, including a destroyer, an offshore patrol vessel, a fast attack craft (missile), a maritime patrol aircraft and an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV), participated in the exercise alongside the Russian Federation Navy (RFN) ships.

Joint maritime exercises with key naval forces underscore the PN's commitment to maintaining maritime security and ensuring a stable maritime order in the region.

The exercise featured multi-faceted maritime warfare drills and a coordinated patrol aimed at enhancing interoperability and demonstrating a joint commitment to countering common maritime security threats.

A key highlight of the exercise was the participation of Pakistan Air Force (PAF) fighter aircraft in various drills.

Residents block Mauripur Road against anti-encroachment operation

KPT claims to have retrieved seven acres in Yousafabad

By Imtiaz Ali

KARACHI: At least three residents of the Yousafabad area were taken into custody when they blocked the Mauripur Road and put up resistance against an anti-encroachment operation launched by the Karachi Port Trust (KPT) on Wednesday.

A spokesperson for the KPT said that the operation at Yousafabad was launched under the supervision of Pakistan Rangers, Sindh.

DC-South Syed Asad Raza told Jinnah that police and district administration were not informed about the action.

He said area residents pulled KPT administration and law enforcers with stones and

blocked the main Mauripur Road. He said that three suspects were briefly detained.

A Rangers spokesperson told Jinnah that the paramilitary force had been taking part in the anti-encroachment drive on the directives of the federal government.

He said the prime minister had directed all law enforcement agencies, including Rangers, to "facilitate" the KPT to get their 1,500 acres of encroached lands vacated.

"The KPT conducted the operation on illegally encroached land and did not disturb the allottees of Yousafabad. The fishermen, who were allotted land in 1950, were not disturbed," the spokesperson said, adding that during the operation, "a recovery of seven acres illegally encroached by land mafia has been made".

The spokesperson clarified that the operation was carried out against two land grabbers, who cut mangroves and reclaimed land from the sea to set up illegal housing schemes.

"In the last two and a half months, about 80 acres of prime land worth Rs4.60 billion has been recovered," he claimed.

MNA condemns action

Pakistan Peoples Party MNA from the area Abdul Qadir Patel condemned the action against the residents including women.

In a statement, he said that he contacted the KPT chairman and Karachi commissioner and asked them to call a meeting to this effect immediately.

He said any action without giving a legal notice to the residents would be deemed as "illegal".

He added that local administration should be taken into confidence prior to such an operation.

"The KPT should get its land vacated but people should not be displaced from their homes," he said.



PARAMILITARY soldiers and enraged protesters face off on Mauripur Road, on Wednesday. —FPF

PRAYER	
Fajr	5.19
Zuhar	12.39
Asr	5.05
Maghrib	6.44
Isha	8.09
Praying time in Karachi	

REFLECTIONS

CC TO OPPRESS A WEAK AND HELP-LESS PERSON IS THE WORST FORM OF TYRANNY

— HAYRAT ALI (A.S.)

Education department begins work on mobile app to digitise teachers' attendance

In next phase, the app will be linked to AG Office to deduct absentees' salaries

Dawn Report

KARACHI: The Sindh government has initiated work on a mobile application aimed at digitally monitoring teachers' and staff attendance, linking attendance records directly with the accountant general's (AG) office, and digitising student enrolment records.

A meeting, chaired by Sindh Education Minister Syed Sander Shah and attended by School Education Secretary Zahid Ali Akbar and others,

was held on Wednesday to discuss the digital attendance system for teachers. During the meeting, the monitoring & evaluation wing demonstrated the mechanism for digitising attendance. It was explained that teachers' attendance will be recorded through the Iris Recognition System, a biometric authentication technology that identifies individuals based on the unique patterns of their irises.

This system will be integrated into the mobile application to ensure the accuracy and security of attendance tracking. "We are embarking on a digital journey of performance, transparency, and monitoring to ensure that resources are utilised based on facts," the education minister told the meeting.

Furthermore, the education minister was briefed that the mobile application

will be integrated with geotagging technology to ensure that teachers and staff can only mark their attendance upon arriving at the school premises.

The app will function even without internet access, as offline attendance data will be automatically updated once the internet is restored.

The meeting also clarified that teachers and staff will be able to mark their attendance by opening the app on their mobile phones and scanning their faces. Attendance will be recorded both when arriving at and leaving school.

Additionally, an option for applying for leave will be included, along with daily, weekly, and monthly attendance reports. The application will also generate reports on late arrivals, early departures, and absences.

To improve efficiency, the education

minister directed that a notification system should be incorporated into the app, sending warnings to mobile phones in case of unreported absences or consistent tardiness.

The student enrolment database will also be linked to the system, integrating student records with B-FORM (national identity registration) for accurate future data tracking.

Minister Shah emphasised that the application should be user-friendly, fast, and secure, allowing all employees to use it without difficulties. He also stressed the importance of cloud-based data storage for enhanced security.

In the next phase, the application will be connected to the Sindh accountant general's office, ensuring that salaries for unreported absences will be automatically deducted through the system.

CM discusses bilateral ties in meetings with Chinese, Iraqi diplomats

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Muneer Ali Shah met with Chinese Consul General Yang Yandong here on Wednesday to discuss ongoing China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects and future collaborations.

During the meeting, the chief minister stated that new development opportunities emerged following President Asif Ali Zardari's meeting with the Chinese president.

He highlighted plans to initiate various water projects in Karachi with Chinese assistance and expand cooperation in solar energy initiatives.

Expressing interest in finalising major development projects, he revealed plans to visit China soon.

He emphasised that PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari gave special importance to Pakistan-China relations, revealing his visit to China as the foreign minister.

The Chinese diplomat assured that investors from China are ready to

enhance their investments in Sindh. Both sides also discussed advancement in agricultural technology and research to improve productivity.

'Tough consulate resumes operations in Karachi'

Also on Wednesday, the CM met with Iraq's Consul General Dr Maher Majid Al Jilani.

Congratulating the consul general on his appointment, the chief minister welcomed him and acknowledged the significance of restoring the consulate's operations in the metropolis after two decades.

He also extended congratulations on the resumption of visa and other services for the people of Sindh.

Dr Jilani emphasised that the reopening of the consulate will benefit citizens, particularly religious pilgrims. He highlighted that Iraq was among the first countries to establish a consulate in Pakistan after its independence.—PPF

SHC orders appointment of visually-impaired lawyer as civil judge

Applicant fulfilled all relevant criteria around a decade ago, court observes

By Ishaq Tariq

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court on Wednesday directed the authority concerned to appoint a visually-impaired lawyer, who had fulfilled all relevant criteria around a decade ago apart from medical certificate, as civil judge/judicial magistrate after relating the fitness conditions.

The SHC observed that unfortunately, the career of the petitioner as judicial officer was sacrificed at the altar of real tape, strict adherence to technicalities and lack of compassion while the same was done in violation of the fundamental rights of the petitioner and the law to protect differently-abled persons from discrimination at work place.

The two-judge constitutional bench headed by Justice Muhammad Karim Khan Agha also said that the petitioner should be appointed on the terms and conditions applicable under the Sindh Judicial Service Rules within four weeks and if no such vacancy existed he be appointed when the next vacancy becomes available.

About the benefits the petitioner seeking from the date of recommendation about his appointment, the bench stated that since he had been practising as a lawyer and earning a livelihood, no back pay or benefits were awarded to him and the petitioner's seniority to be determined by the administrative committee of the SHC if the petitioner moved such an application.

It also noted that the government was moving with the times and passing legislation which was more responsive to the needs of its citizens and the courts must also play their role in implementing such

beneficial legislation.

Citing the law department, registrar of SHC and others as respondents, Syed Nadeq Hussain had petitioned the SHC in 2016 and sought directive for them to relax the medical conditions for his appointment as civil judge/judicial magistrate and to release the salary and other benefits right from his date of recommendation for appointment, in July 22, 2015.

However, additional advocate general Ali Sakhir Dagar contended that the maximum age limit even in case of extension of service or upper age limit for an advocate practising was 35 years while the petitioner was over 39, while in the subject advertisement for the post of civil judge & judicial magistrate published in the year of 2014, there was no mention of quota for differently-abled persons.

Besides, he also argued that the petitioner had also filed application for the post of additional district & sessions judge which was accompanied by a medical certificate issued by the Services Hospital declaring the petitioner as visually-impaired.

The bench in its order noted that the petitioner was a promising practicing lawyer who had aspired to become a civil judge and had also fulfilled all the relevant criteria including the written examinations and interview conducted by the provincial selection board consisting of the senior most judges of SHC and listed on serial No.39 on the merit list out of 78.

He was then sent along with the other successful candidates before the medical board for his medical, but unfortunately, the medical board due to his impaired vision found him unfit to join the judicial service, it added.

Thereafter, the bench noted that the petitioner wrote a letter to the then chief justice of SHC setting out the adverse medical finding and requesting for a relaxation in his medical fitness requirement.

"Unfortunately, his letter went unanswered as per record. Thus, as a last resort he approached this

court in the constitutional jurisdiction for relief by filing this petition in 2016 which is over 8 long years ago," it added.

The bench also stated that such narrative had been confirmed by the comments of the registrar of the SHC who only took the exception that the petitioner was over age and that the job advertisement for the post for which he applied did not include any disability quota.

In fact, a close examination of the record reveals that at the time of his application the petitioner was within the prescribed age limit, it said and added that the main obstacle in the way of petitioner being appointed as a civil judge/judicial magistrate was his impaired vision.

It said, "We find that the Registrar's argument in his comments that the advertisement did not cater for differently-abled persons frivolous as when the petitioner applied for the post The Disabled Persons (Employment and Rehabilitation) Ordinance 1981 was in the field which we find along with the other Acts relating to disabled persons mentioned above are automatically both true and become a part of any job advertisement".

The bench also said that the petitioner should have been treated in a more humane and compassionate manner and if the SHC was doubtful that the petitioner could perform the required functions of the post it should have called him and discovered the extent of his disability and found out whether he would be able to perform the functions of his post despite his disability and even put him on probation if necessary.

"We were then since the filing of this petition that the petitioner has continued to regularly practice law before both the high courts and lower courts where he has numerous cases to his credit. In court he was able to read his petition, his own type and demonstrated that he can use electronic devices with the aid of other modern devices for persons with impaired vision", it added.

Mediation centre set up at City Courts

KARACHI: The Sindh High Court has established a court-annexed mediation centre at the City Courts and appointed two judicial officers to conduct alternative dispute resolution (ADR) proceedings.

SHC Registrar Sahail Muhammad Laghari issued two notifications on Wednesday, stating that the "court-annexed mediation centre" has been set up at the sessions courts East with the approval of acting Chief Justice Muhammad Jamshed Ghaffar.

The acting chief justice also appointed Senior Civil Judge Syed Faraz Ali Zaidi and Civil Judge Mrs Talwana to initiate and conduct ADR proceedings through the mediation centre in cases referred by the courts. —Staff Reporter

Sindh PA

Continued from Page 13

were working for the benefit of the people in the province.

PTT's Rehan Barchakda said that water is the most important issue in the entire city, including his constituency.

Shahid Shera of the PPP said that the extensive works and projects were carried out by the health department. He demanded that a trauma centre should be established in Hyderabad.

MQM-P member Anwar Siddiquee came hard on the provincial government and said that no sewage scheme had been introduced in different areas of his constituency for the past 20 years.

He also lamented the poor standard of education and said that the education sector in Karachi had been destroyed, adding that the schools in the city lacked basic facilities such as washrooms and drinking water.

Nyed Usman, also of MQM-P, demanded that the salaries of lower grade employees be increased by 50 per cent and pensions should be increased by 25 per cent.

PTP's Asif Khan, PPP's Ijaz Ali Sheikh, Agha Siraj Charrani, Iqbal Butt, Shaker Shera and Tariq Muhammad Mallah, provincial ministers Jam Khan Shera, Zulfiqar Shah, and MQM-P's Farhan Anwar and PTT's Waqar Hussain and Muhammad Usman also spoke on the occasion.

Later, the house was adjourned to 11am on Thursday.

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NOTICE TO PUBLIC

KARACHI

ALHAMBULLAH, our client has contracted to purchase Plot No. 34-11 measuring 140 sq yards, Sheikhan & Hakeem, Phase V, DHA Karachi, near (1) Mr. Zein Ali Bin Sheikhan, (2) Mr. Zein Ali Bin Sheikhan, (3) Mr. Zein Ali Bin Sheikhan, (4) Mr. Zein Ali Bin Sheikhan, (5) Mr. Zein Ali Bin Sheikhan, (6) Mr. Zein Ali Bin Sheikhan, (7) Mr. Zein Ali Bin Sheikhan, (8) Mr. Zein Ali Bin Sheikhan, (9) Mr. Zein Ali Bin Sheikhan, (10) Mr. Zein Ali Bin Sheikhan, (11) Mr. Zein Ali Bin Sheikhan, (12) Mr. Zein Ali Bin Sheikhan, (13) Mr. Zein Ali Bin Sheikhan, (14) Mr. Zein Ali Bin Sheikhan, (15) Mr. Zein Ali Bin Sheikhan, (16) Mr. Zein Ali Bin Sheikhan, (17) Mr. Zein Ali Bin Sheikhan, (18) Mr. Zein Ali Bin Sheikhan, (19) Mr. Zein Ali Bin Sheikhan, (20) Mr. Zein Ali Bin Sheikhan, (21) Mr. Zein Ali Bin Sheikhan, (22) Mr. Zein Ali Bin Sheikhan, (23) Mr. Zein Ali Bin Sheikhan, (24) Mr. Zein Ali Bin Sheikhan, (25) Mr. Zein Ali Bin Sheikhan, (26) Mr. Zein Ali Bin Sheikhan, (27) Mr. Zein Ali Bin Sheikhan, (28) Mr. 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SITUATION VACANT

A Foreign funded project in Sindh intends to recruit following positions through a competitive process. The appointments are on purely temporary basis on contract basis, applicant should possess domicile of Sindh province.

S.No	Designation	No. of Posts	Qualified & Experience	Age Limit
01.	Accounts Officer (PPS-7)	1	Qualification: Master of Business Administration. Experience: • At least 5 years of experience in accounting and financial management. • Proven experience with foreign-funded projects and donor regulations. • Strong knowledge of accounting software and financial management systems. • Excellent communication and reporting skills.	40 years
02.	Communication Specialist (PPS-7)	1	Qualification: Bachelor's degree in Communication, Journalism, Public Relations, or Masters in Social Sciences or related field. Experience: • At least 5 years of experience in communication, preferably in a development project or organization. • Strong knowledge of communication principles, theories, and practices. • Excellent writing, editing, and verbal communication skills. • Ability to work in a fast-paced environment and meet deadlines.	40 years
03.	Assistant Director Environmental (PPS-7)	1	Qualification: Master's degree in Environmental Sciences, Environmental Engineering, or related field. Experience: • At least 5 years of experience in environmental management, preferably in a development project or organization. • Strong knowledge of environmental impact assessment, environmental management planning, and compliance with national and international environmental standards. • Excellent communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills. • Ability to work in a fast-paced environment and meet deadlines.	40 years
04.	Inspector (Environment) (PPS-4)	1	Qualification: Bachelor's degree in Environmental Sciences, Environmental Engineering, or related field. Experience:	40 years

05.	Technical Assistant (PPS-4)	1	• At least 3 years of experience in environmental inspection and monitoring. • Strong knowledge of environmental regulation and standards. • Excellent communication, teamwork, and problem-solving skills. • Ability to work in a fast-paced environment and meet deadlines. Qualification: Diploma or degree in Civil Engineering, Water Resources Engineering, or related field. Experience: • At least 3 years of experience in civil construction work.	40 years
06.	Computer Operator (PPS-3)	2	Qualification: Diploma or degree in Computer Science, Information Technology, or related field. Experience: • At least 2 years of experience in computer operations, data management, and technical support. Skills: • Proficient in Microsoft Office, database management, and network administration. • Excellent problem-solving and communication skills.	40 years
07.	Computer Technician/Modeler (PPS-3)	1	Qualification: Bachelor's degree in Computer Science, Information Technology, or related field. Experience: • At least 2 years of experience in computer operations, data management, and modeling. Skills: • Proficient in computer programming languages, data analysis software, and mathematical modeling tools. • Excellent problem-solving and communication skills.	40 years
08.	Receptionist (PPS-4)	1	Qualification: Intermediate or equivalent qualification. Experience: • At least 1 year of experience in a receptionist or administrative role. Skills: • Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, proficiency in Microsoft Office, and ability to maintain confidentiality.	40 years
09.	Telephone Operator (PPS-4)	1	Qualification: Intermediate or equivalent qualification. Experience:	40 years

10.	Dispatcher (PPS-4)	1	• At least 3 years of experience in a telephone operator or related role. Skills: • Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, proficiency in telephone operations, and ability to work in a fast-paced environment. Qualification: Intermediate or equivalent qualification. Experience: • At least 2 years of experience in a dispatching or related role. Skills: • Excellent communication and interpersonal skills, proficiency in scheduling and dispatching software, and ability to work in a fast-paced environment.	40 years
11.	Driver (PPS-2)	12	Qualification: License with a valid driving license. Experience: • At least 2 years of experience as a driver. Skills: • Excellent driving skills, knowledge of traffic laws and regulations, and ability to work in a fast-paced environment.	35 Years
12.	Office Boy (PPS-2)	10	Qualification: License with basic knowledge of office procedures. Experience: • At least 1 year of experience in a similar role. Skills: • Ability to work in a fast-paced environment, excellent communication skills, and a positive attitude.	25 Years
13.	Sanitary (PPS-1)	2	Qualification: Basic literacy skills. Experience: • At least 6 months of experience in a similar role. Skills: • Ability to work in a fast-paced environment, physical stamina to perform manual labor.	20 Years

Interested candidates may send their CVs with photographs along with copies of Academic Certificates, relevant experience certificates, CNIC and covering letter addressed to P.O Box No. 13867 should reach on or before **20th April 2025**.
• Non-Preference will be given to experienced candidates.
• Only short-listed candidates will be called for interview, so TADA will be applicable for candidates.
• Appointments will be based on the recommendations of recruitment committee.

Project Office,
P.O Box No. 13867

INF-007 01/2025

1 WORK FOR SINDH



PAKISTAN NAVY

ANNUAL CONTRACTS FOR VSD AT KARACHI

TENDER NOTICE

1. All GST (Income Tax) registered firms/suppliers are invited for supply of following items to Pakistan Navy for VSD at Karachi. The Offer for Meat Tinned (Beef Hakeem, Chicken Hakeem, Chicken with Grains, Chicken Karachi & Beef Nihar) is to be submitted in terms of Para 36(3) of PPPRA rules 2004, i.e. single stage two envelope procedure. Delivery of items will be made by the firms at their own arrangements. All participating firms are requested to attach earnest money (pay order) in favor of COMDEP welfare and improvement fund A/C No 01790103296198 (Meezan Bank) with quotations. Offers without pay order will not be entertained.

S.No	Description	Quantity with Accounting Unit	Tender To Be Issued On	Date & Time of Receipt of Tender	Tender To Be Opened On
1.	Meat (Tinned or Equivalent) Beef Hakeem Chicken Hakeem Chicken with Grains Chicken Karachi Beef Nihar	7,000 Kgs 8,000 Kgs 5,000 Kgs 3,000 Kgs 2,000 Kgs	20-03-25	07-04-25 11:00 AM	07-04-25 11:30 AM
2.	Garlic Fresh	24,000 Kgs			
3.	Pepper Black	7,000 Kgs			

2. "Invitation to Tender" forms may be collected during working hours from Office of the Commander Depot Group (COMDEP), at Naval Stores Sub Depot, West Wharf Road, Karachi. Tender detail is also visible on PPPRA website (www.pppra.org.pk). Tender will be received/closed at 11:00 AM hours and will be opened at COMDEP office at 11:30 AM hours on above mentioned date. Interested firms/suppliers who have previous experience of supply of above mentioned commodities may apply/contact for more details on following addresses/phone numbers.

OFFICE OF THE COMDEP
at Naval Stores Sub Depot, West Wharf Road, Karachi
Tel: 021-48508245

DAWN

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DAWN

COUNTRY SUPPLEMENTS

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FOR THE ADVERTISING IN
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KARACHI PORT TRUST

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

PROCUREMENT OF CONSULTANCY SERVICES

Karachi Port Trust (KPT) invites Expression of Interest (EOI) from experienced and competent Consulting Firms, who are registered with Federal and Provincial Tax authorities and in Active Taxpayers list of the Federal Board of Revenue, to submit Expression of Interest (EOI) for Procurement of Consultancy Services, for Planning, Designing and Construction supervision of Auditorium Cum Convention Center at 1-Band Anna, KPT Head Office Karachi by adopting Regulation 2(B) methods for selection of Consultants, Quality & Cost Based Selection of Procurement of Consultancy Services Regulations, 2018 of PPPRA.

The work, mainly comprises of:

- Detailed Design of Auditorium Cum Convention Center having facilities as stated in scope of services in the Prequalification Document.
- Preparation of BOQ's Tender documents/ drawing and conducting of procurement cycle for Construction of Auditorium Cum Convention Center.

Eligibility Criteria:

Terms & Conditions:

- Having valid PEC/PCATP registration/License Certificate.
- The interested Firm must have experience regarding Design and Supervision of Complex Civil Structures.
- The interested Firm must have Technical Personnel for successful implementation of designing of Conventional Centers etc. and must possess firm's experience as stated in the Prequalification Documents.
- The interested firm should provide an undertaking on Legal Stamp paper stating that "The Bidder's company is not blacklisted by any Government entity in Pakistan for unsatisfactory performance, corrupt, fraudulent or any other unethical business practices and not involved in any kind of lawsuits with KPT either current or pending".
- Applicants fulfilling the Eligibility Criteria must write an undertaking signed by their officials on company letter head confirming fulfillment of criteria.
- The firm must possess Financial Soundness as stated under in case of Companies, firms, individuals or sole proprietor, last three year Audited Financial Statements are to be provided showing minimum average turnover of Rs. 20 million.

Guidelines for submission of EOI:

In order to qualify for the next stage, the Consulting firm must meet the stated eligibility criteria. Interested firms fulfilling the defined criteria are requested to submit their Expression of Interest by providing information that, they possess which reflects their required capability and expertise (including firm/company profile, relevant experience, financial statements, description and experience of similar work, resume of appropriate personnel with appropriate skills, documents above mentioned and any other relevant information, etc.)

Expression of Interest at the firm's meeting above listed criteria must be submitted online through E-PAOS on or before 17-04-2025 by 1800 Hrs. and will be opened on the same day at 1000 Hrs., publicly. Shortlisted firms who will qualify on the stated eligibility criteria will be contacted for submission of Technical and Financial Proposal. KPT also reserves the right to cancel this invitation at any stage. This advertisement is also available on KPT (www.kpt.gov.pk) MOMA (www.moma.gov.pk) and PPPRA (www.pppra.org.pk) websites.

All the interested firms must be registered through E-PAOS for submission of their EOI.

Chief Engineer
Karachi Port Trust
Ph: 99214316, 99214366, Fax: 99214329-36, www.kpt.gov.pk

MAKE YOUR BUSINESS GROW.

ADVERTISE IN

DAWN

INDUSTRY SUPPLEMENTS

Call Manager Supplements in Karachi Lahore or Islamabad
On UAE: 111-444-777

PEOPLES STEEL MILLS LTD.

Javedan Nagar, Manghopir, Karachi

ADDENDUM / CORRIGENDUM

PRE-QUALIFICATION CIVIL CONSTRUCTION FIRMS

With reference to Advertisement dated 02-03-2025, published in Daily JANG & DAWN Karachi regarding Pre-qualification of civil construction firms. It is to be noted that date of submission of pre-qualification documents is extended to **10-04-2025**.

All Terms & Conditions of the advertisement will remain the same.

Please collect / submit application forms / documents during working days (Monday to Friday) from 08:00 Hrs. to 12:30 Hrs.

G. M (M & S) Div.-III,
Peoples Steel Mills Ltd.
Javedan Nagar, Manghopir, Karachi
Tel: 021-36770126-128 Ext. 1712, 1714, 1708

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT

SESSIONS COURT KARACHI (SOUTH)

No./DCIA/S/- 1170/2025 Karachi Date: 12-03-2025
Tender Reference No. DJS-C-South
Tender/CCTV/2024-2025/1

TENDER NOTICE

District and Sessions Court Karachi South, invites sealed tender on standard bidding documents from the interest bidders registered with the relevant regulatory authorities for procurement of CCTV cameras with accessories mentioned below:

S.No.	Description	Last date of Submission of Bids	Date & Time of opening of Bids
1	Tender for Supply and Installation of IP Based CCTV System along with all accessories at City Court, Promenade Karachi	10 th April 2025 at 11:00 AM	10 th April 2025 at 11:30 A.M.

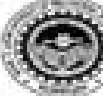
1) Tender document, which includes full details, eligibility criteria, specifications, mechanism of submission of 5% bid security other terms & conditions will be downloaded E-pads or sent via email (karachisouth@indhigahcourt.gov.pk) OR direct download link: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1N003Balg7VIA6Nq5SAUWA1A6nQ1EhF0d0tUspwdrw/edit?usp=drive_link&ouid=118404618867413272718&role=viewer&edit=true

2) For general queries, contact office of the I.T./CCTV Branch, District & Sessions Court, Karachi (South) Cell: 0335-3024512, 021-99216313, 021-99215913 and chairman procurement committee Cell: 0335-3323264, 021-99215183.

3) Chairman and Member Procurement Committee, Karachi South reserves the right to accept/reject any or all offers subject to rules.

(Additional District & Sessions Judge-3)
Chairman, Procurement Committee Karachi (South)

inf-007 01/2025



QUAID-E-AWAM UNIVERSITY

OF ENGINEERING, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, HAWABSHAH

SARDAR ROAD, HAWABSHAH, 81430

No. QUEST/EN/PROC/123 **PROCUREMENT OFFICE** Dated: 17.03.2025
(Email: proc@quest.edu.pk) Phone: +92-344-9370381 ext. 3159 Web: www.quest.edu.pk

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Quaid-e-Awam University of Engineering, Science & Technology (QUEST) Nawabshah, invited a bid through E-Pak Application and Bidding system (E-PAOS). The details of tenders are as under:

S#	Description of work	Bid Security	Tender Fee	Procurement Procedure
01	Procurement of (M) & (FP) Modules at Quaid-e-Awam University of Engineering Science and Technology Nawabshah	Most advantageous bid (quality and cost-based selection) (QCBS)	PKR 5000/- (Non-refundable)	Single Stage Two Envelopes

Bid Doc. Issuance: Bid Document can be downloaded from QUEST and PPPRA (E-PAOS) Websites from 21.03.2025 to 14.04.2025 and duly filled Bid Document will also be uploaded on PPPRA (E-PAOS) by Contractor.

Tender Fee and Application: The bidder shall pay the tender fee in the stage of S.O. / Pay order in the favor of Director Finance, QUEST Nawabshah.

Contact Details: Procurement Manager: PMP 0344-9370381 ext. 2533 & Email Address: proc@quest.edu.pk

Bids Submission: (Date & time): 18.04.2025 up to 11:00 AM will be submitted online on PPPRA (E-PAOS) Website.

Bids Opening: On 18.04.2025 at 11:30 PM in the Procurement Manager Office at Sector A, Electrical Engineering Department, Quaid-e-Awam University of Engineering, Science and Technology, Nawabshah.

Bid Security: The bid security shall be provided in the stage of S.O. / Pay Order only in the name of Director Finance, QUEST Nawabshah.

Bid Validity Period: 90 days

Eligibility:

- Valid registration in NTN, and BSN (whichever applicable).
- Minimum five years of experience in relevant field, detailed criteria is available in the bid document.
- Turnover as mentioned in Bid document.
- ERP Development, Deployment & Implementation At least 3 similar nature projects for public/ Private sector universities.
- Bids shall be evaluated as per Evaluation Criteria mentioned in the bid document.
- Undertaking of affidavit that the firm is not involved in any litigation of abandoned or executing agency.
- Detailed portfolio of company profile.
- The firm should not be blacklisted (additionally required).
- The bidder shall read all the terms and conditions mentioned in the bid document.
- Non-compliant bids shall be treated as non-responsive.

Terms and Conditions:

- The bids will be opened on the date and time as mentioned above in the presence of bidders or their authorized representatives who wish to attend.
- The procurement agency reserves the right to accept or reject any or all financial bids as per PPPRA rules.
- In case of any unforeseen event, the tenders will be opened on next working day.
- Bids not accompanying the bid security of required amount shall be rejected.
- Bid received after specified date and time shall not be considered.

PROCUREMENT MANAGER
QUEST Nawabshah

PMD-008/24

ISLAMABAD

Sunset 06:20pm
Sunrise (Tomorrow) 06:08am

NEXT 24 HRS

Minimum 18°C
Maximum 28°C
Outlook Mainly Sunny

METRO North

ISLAMABAD RAMAZAN TIMING		
ISLAMABAD	ISLAMABAD	
Iftar (today)	Iftar (today)	
6:20pm	6:20pm	
Sahur (Tomorrow)	Sahur (Tomorrow)	
4:46am	4:28am	



LIGHTNING strikes over Islamabad as the city received rain on Wednesday evening. The light showers turn the weather pleasant. — Online

CDA to dole out subsidised plots to employees, court told

IHC allows civic body to commence process of allotment to petitioners

By Malik Asad

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has decided to dole out as many as 6,500 plots to its employees at subsidised rates, its counsel informed the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday.

CDA's counsel Nazir Jawad shared the details before Justice Raja Iqbal Akram Minhas during the hearing of identical petitions lodged by a number of CDA employees seeking allotment of plots at subsidised rates.

CDA's counsel Nazir Jawad informed the court about the decision of the civic agency's board taken recently.

He stated, "The CDA is ready to allot plots to the petitioners in underdeveloped sectors, i.e. C-13, D-13, C-14, C-15, E-16, F-14, E-12, Park Enclave and Kori Model Village, subject to acceptance of the offer by CBA [collective bargaining agent] and others."

The CDA's union, on the other hand, promptly accepted the offer and the judge directed the civic agency "to commence the process of allotment of plots to the petitioners and CBA".

Interestingly, the members of the CDA Board of Directors are also beneficiaries and at present all of them are working on deputation and they may get bigger plots while other employees will be allotted comparatively small plots.

The CDA is governed by a board which consists of a chairman and various members. Of the more than 120 members that have served in the CDA since the agency's inception, hardly 20 were regular CDA employees. It is said that only one regular CDA officer, Shafiq Saeed, has ever become the chairman of the civic agency in all these years.

CDA's counsel Jawad, when contacted, said the court order would be applicable to all the CDA's employees, including the members of its board.

According to some lawyers, the CDA stance seems not only contradictory to the government's austerity drive but also negates the judgements of the superior courts, including one authored by Justice Mianqul Hassan Aurangzeb in 2023.

As per a recent auction, the CDA val-

ued a plot measuring one kanal in Sector C-14 around Rs60 million. The auctioned 6,500 plots are of different categories, ranging from 5 marla to a kanal. According to an estimate these plots are likely worth over Rs1 trillion.

In 2023, the IHC ruled that allotment of plots to the CDA employees and selected categories on subsidised rates was contradictory to the constitutional provisions and directed the cash-strapped federal government to ensure the disposal of state land at competitive prices.

IHC Justice Mianqul Hassan Aurangzeb on a petition of a CDA employee Mohammad Iqbal seeking a subsidised plot in Sector D-12 had observed that "any criteria made by the CDA board which is not designed to achieve the best possible price for the plots in other sectors would be prima facie repugnant to Article 173 of the Constitution that empowered the government to acquire land as well as the law laid down by the superior courts."

Section 49 of the Capital Development Authority Ordinance 1960 provides that the CDA may retain, or may lease, sell, exchange, rent or otherwise dispose of any land vested in it.

It is implied in the said provision that the sale or disposal of CDA's land has to be at the best possible rates which can only be realised through an auction or a competitive bidding process.

To dispose of land at a rate even slightly lower than the market rate than can be realised for it in a transparent auction or a competitive bidding process would be prima facie not just irrational but detrimental to the state, the court observed.

The court order states, "Allotment of a plot worth millions of rupees is not part of the terms and conditions of service of any of the categories of employee/public functionaries mentioned in Regulation 5(1) of the 2005[CDA] Regulations. To provide them with a windfall in the form of the allotment of a plot at a rate which is not commensurate to the rate that can be realised for it in an open auction is a strain on the national exchequer..."

In 2013, IHC Justice Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui ruled that those working on deputation in the CDA were not entitled to subsidised plots.

Later on, Justice Athar Minallah ruled against the distribution of plots at throw-away prices to the regular employees of the civic agency.

Two children in Chilas die after eating tainted Iftar food

By Jamil Nagri

GILGIT: Two children of a family were killed while six others were hospitalised after consuming contaminated food during Iftar on Monday in Gilgit Baltistan's Chilas, officials said on Tuesday.

Rescue 1122 reported that all family members in the Thari area of Chilas tainted after having an Iftar meal.

A rescue official said that all eight family members were taken to the Chilas regional headquarters hospital in an unconscious state, where 10-year-old Imtiaz Ali died on Monday night and his three-year-old sister Aila Bibi passed away on Tuesday morning.

"The others are still being treated," he said.

Initially, a spokesperson for the Chilas district administration said it was unclear what was mixed in the food which the family ate.

However, local police later alleged that the Chilas resident, identified as Gulab Shah, whose family was poisoned had two wives living under the same roof.

Mr Shah's second wife, who left with her only child for her parents' home just before the others had the meal may have mixed the poison in the Iftar meal.

The six hospitalised family members were identified as Gulab Shah, Neel, Gul Shorn, Nahida, six-year-old Nazia and three-year-old Nees.

The police also said Shah had six children from his first wife and one from his second.

Police sources said an investigation is underway and the facts would be unearthed after an investigation.

Youth shot dead over petty dispute

RAWALPINDI: A young man was gunned down while two others were injured in a quarrel between the two groups in the Westridge area on Wednesday.

Khurshid Anwar, a resident of Westridge lodged a complaint with the police stating that he serves in Pakistan Railways and has two sons and two daughters. He said his elder son, Ahmad Bilal, left the house at around 11:30pm with his friend Asad Ali, who had also been living in his neighbourhood, for Okoke Khatri to visit their friend Shah.

He further said that he received a phone call at 2:40am that Ahmad Bilal had been shot at Range Road and they were shifting him to the Rawalpindi District Headquarters Hospital (DHQ).

He said after receiving the phone call, he with brothers Arshad Mahmood and Muhammad Noman hurriedly reached the DHQ hospital where they found Bilal's body lying in the mortuary.

He said Asad Ali informed him that he and Ahmad Bilal were present at his friend's house in Okoke Khatri when Ahmad Bilal received a phone call from another friend and called him to reach Range Road.

On reaching Range Road, they started playing snooker and sometime later when they came out of the club, they found Zafar Yab and another person there.

Unsurprisingly some words with Zafar Yab over a petty issue and pulled out a gun in a fit of anger.

Ahmad Bilal tried to intervene but the suspect shot at the three friends, injuring them all.

The injured were rushed to the DHQ hospital where Ahmad Bilal succumbed to his injuries, while the other two were stated to be in critical condition. — Staff Reporter

Expert asks WhatsApp users to beware of cybercriminals

By Ikram Junaidi

ISLAMABAD: While WhatsApp accounts are being hacked and stolen, and stolen accounts are used for various criminal activities, ranging from spam distribution to sophisticated financial frauds, technology expert Hafiz Aziz has suggested that the masses be careful.

"There are two ways cybercriminals can gain control of a WhatsApp account. They can add another device to an existing account using the 'linked device' feature, or they can re-register the account on their own device as if the user had bought a new phone. In the first

case, the user continues to use WhatsApp as usual, but the criminals also have access to all recent conversations. In the second case, the user loses access to their personal account. When trying to log in, WhatsApp notifies him that the account is already in use on another device, and the attackers can then control the account but not the past conversations," Mr Aziz, who is associated with cyber security company Kaspersky, said.

Instant messengers often contain both personal information about our lives and relationships, and details about work including, in some cases, confidential information. If you notice any unusual activity,

such as receiving replies to messages that you didn't send, or if your friends complain about strange messages coming from your account, it's important to take steps to protect your privacy immediately. These steps can include logging out on all other devices except your phone, as well as informing your friends and family — in a call, an update of your WhatsApp status, or on social networks — warning not to trust messages from the hacked account and not to send money," said Hafiz Aziz.

"You can check instructions on what to do in case WhatsApp account was already compromised, while to avoid WhatsApp account from being

hacked, user should enable two-step verification in WhatsApp and memorize your PIN, which is not a one-time code. To do this, go to Settings > Account > Two-step verification. Never, ever share your PIN or one-time registration codes with anyone. Only scammers ask for these details. WhatsApp recently introduced support for passkeys. If you enable this option (Settings > Account > Passkeys), logging in to your account will require biometric authentication, and instead of PIN codes, your smartphone will store a long cryptographic key. This is a very secure option, but it may not be convenient if you frequently change devices and

switch between Android and iOS," he said.

"Make sure you haven't fallen victim to a SIM swap scam. Contact your mobile carrier — preferably in person — and verify that no duplicate SIM cards have recently been issued for your number. Also, make sure there's no unauthorized call forwarding set up on your number. Cancel any suspicious changes and ask the staff about additional security measures for your SIM card. Any security measures in WhatsApp will be of little use if your smartphone or computer is infected with malware. Therefore, be sure to install comprehensive protection on all your devices," Hafiz Aziz said.

HEC to get land in sector I-17 for construction of universities

By Kashif Abbasi

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) has decided to provide land to Higher Education Commission (HEC) for construction of two universities in sector I-17.

Earlier, in 2005, CDA had provided 250 acres to HEC in Kori area, but due to adverse possession issue, the CDA did not hand over possession of the land to HEC.

Recently, the CDA in collaboration with Defense Housing

Authority (DHA) has launched Margalla Enclave Housing Project in I-17. While, CDA board decided that all government educational institutions, which were earlier allotted land in Kori area, will be provided alternative land in I-17.

"The plots designated for universities and educational institutions have been relocated to the Institutional Sector (I-17) following approval from the CDA Board and the federal government. This sector has been specifically earmarked for the development of universities and institutions," a CDA official told

Dawn.

In a brief statement, the civic agency further stated: "In parallel, for the housing sector at Kori Model Village, the CDA and the DHA have launched the Margalla Enclave project, also approved by the CDA Board and the federal government."

On the other hand, sources in the HEC said that back in 2005, HEC procured 250 acres from CDA for establishment of University of Engineering, Sciences and Technology.

Later on, the HEC out of allotted

250 acre, earmarked 35 acres for National University of Law. Later on despite efforts made by CDA and HEC, the possession of land could not be secured as locals were residing on HEC's allotted land. Sources said that HEC is now looking for its allotted land or for alternative land. "Soon we will hold meeting with CDA in this regard," said an official of the HEC.

However, CDA officials on Wednesday told Dawn that HEC would be providing land in sector I-17. "We will provide alternative land to HEC in sector I-17, as we did

in case of Federal Investigation Agency and some other government organisations," he said.

Sources in HEC said that besides said university land, the HEC had also several plots worth billions of rupees in various markets of Islamabad including G-11 and I-8, which are lying unused.

"This is high time for HEC to secure its land and start construction," said an official of HEC adding that if the CDA fulfil its commitment of providing alternative land in sector I-17, then the commission should take urgent steps to start

construction of universities over there to avoid encroachment.

CDA had acquired 3200 acres in Kori, Moghhan and Rehala revenue estate in Zone IV in 70s. But, it remained badly failed to get possession of its acquired land from local landholders. However, recently, CDA-DHA got possession of 10,000 kanal, where a joint venture of Margalla Enclave has been launched. According to agreement, CDA will get 55pc of share in plots while DHA will have 45 pc. The DHA is executing the project and development is continued with full pace.

Parliamentarians discuss gender-responsive budgeting

ISLAMABAD: The Women's Parliamentary Caucus of the National Assembly, on Wednesday hosted a session on Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) at the Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Services (PIPS).

Held under Secretary Dr Shabida Rehmani, the session focused on formulating a strategic approach to integrate gender-sensitive measures into public service and policy implementation, aligning Pakistan's efforts with international commitments such as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Titled "Federal Budget FY2025-26: Promoting Gender Responsive Budgeting," the session was moderated by constitutional expert Zafarullah Khan and organised in collaboration with Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, said a press release issued here.

In her opening remarks, Dr Shabida Rehmani underscored WPC's commitment to gender-inclusive policy reforms and highlighted the Gender Responsive Budgeting Strategy 2023, which outlined a framework for integrating gender considerations into national budgets.

MNA Barrister Ayesha Malik, provided an update on the Gender Mainstreaming Committee, now chaired by MNA Dr Nafisa Shah. She detailed the committee's collaboration with government departments to incorporate GRB into policies and its ongoing analysis of gender-related budget data to ensure equitable allocation of funds in the upcoming Federal Budget FY2025-26. She also advocated for

equal development funds for MNAs holding reserved seats.

The session brought together parliamentarians, representatives from the Omar Asghar Khan Foundation, civil society members, and academia. MNA Kayan Mait Khush Das highlighted the multifaceted roles of women in society, acknowledging their contributions as homemakers, professionals, politicians, and public representatives.

Syeda Noorunnisa Durrani, President of the Young Parliamentarians Forum (YPF), shed light on challenges faced by women in her constituency, including lack of representation among female voters, absence of ownership rights for divorced women, economic dependence, and limited access to healthcare and education.

MNA Dr Nafisa Shah emphasised the Gender Mainstreaming Committee's efforts in promoting gender-responsive budgeting. She noted that formal recommendations had been sent to the finance ministry and planning and development ministry, urging the inclusion of gender-focused budgetary allocations in the FY2025-26 federal budget. She also voiced concerns over disparities in constituency development funds and called for intervention at the Prime Minister's Office to address the issue.

Participants maintained that the session served as a crucial platform for advancing gender-inclusive financial policies, reinforcing the role of gender-responsive budgeting in achieving women's empowerment and fostering national and international gender equality objectives. — Staff Reporter

Absence of women police delaying search, combing operations in Pindi

By Mohammad Asghar

RAWALPINDI: In the wake of the prevailing security situation and the upcoming March 23 celebrations, police are conducting search and combing operations in different parts of the garrison city. However, absence of women police is creating problems in the smooth conduct of the operations — especially in Rawal Division.

According to sources, the superintendent of police Rawal Division has taken notice of the delay in women police joining the search operation duty which, he said, was creating problems for the police in Rawal Division areas.

To cope with the situation, eight women police personnel have been assigned the duty of in-charge of city, Garjmandi, Ratta Aera, Pindrawal, Waris Khan, Kanna, New Town and Sadiqabad.

They will head lady constables and joining of teams that are set to launch search and combing operation in their respective areas.

The SP also directed the police to ensure compliance with his orders and warned those who failed to follow the directives of departmental action.

Besides the district police, the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) and Special

Branch personnel are also participating in the search and combing operations which are being conducted on a daily basis in different areas.

In the limits of Waris Khan police circle, besides the police, army personnel are also participating in the operation.

Police officials taking part in the search operations have been provided bullet proof jackets and helmets for their safety while CTD staff will be assigned to gather intelligence.

In Potohar Division, SP Potohar Ahmad Talah Wali will be heading the search and combing operations which will be conducted in Jhanda Chak and its surrounding areas, katchi abadi of Airport police area,

Margah, Cantonment, Daska Banaras, Race Course, Ghaziabad, R.A. Bazaar, Wazirabad, Nasserabad and Taxila. Search operation in Saddar Division will be supervised by SP Saddar Nabeel Khokhar.

Meanwhile, police have chalked out a security plan for Yousaf Ali. As many as 1,500 police personnel and 100 traffic police will be deployed to ensure peaceful conduct of majlis and holding of mourning processions in the garrison city.

As many as 42 processions will be brought out while 74 majlis will be held. The main procession will be taken out on March 21.

Minister asks Pims staff to treat patients with kindness

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Health Syed Mustafa Kamal on his first visit to Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (Pims) on Wednesday urged doctors, paramedical staff and nurses to treat patients with kindness and professionalism.

"Patients come to hospitals to get best possible treatment for their loved ones and hope to return happily with the recovered relatives. A few kind words can be a source of healing for patients and their attendants," he said.

"We must ensure the provision of quality healthcare and do everything in our power to improve hospital services," he said.



HEALTH Minister Mustafa Kamal talks to the hospital staff during his visit to Pims in Islamabad on Wednesday. — White Star

During the visit, the hospital administration provided a detailed briefing to the minister. He was informed about the medical facilities available, the resources at hand, and the challenges faced by the hospital in delivering quality healthcare.

Furthermore, the minister was updated on ongoing projects and the upgrade initiatives at Pims. It was informed that Pims receives approximately 6,000 to 7,000 patients daily. The minister was also briefed on the construction of a new 200-bed emergency facility, which is expected to become functional by June.

Mustafa Kamal inquired about the various tests being conducted in the hospital's laboratories. He instructed hospital authorities to submit a comprehensive report on the challenges, recommendations and future plans for improvement at the earliest.

Minister Mustafa Kamal reaffirmed the government's commitment to strengthening healthcare infrastructure and ensuring the delivery of efficient medical services to the public.

Bangladesh for strengthening collaboration in higher education

ISLAMABAD: High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Pakistan Iqbal Hossain Khan on Wednesday called for strengthening bilateral collaboration in the higher education sector through enhanced facilitation to students.

According to a statement, Mr Khan met Higher Education Commission (HEC) Chairman Dr Mokhtar Ahmed at the HEC Secretariat.

The two sides discussed measures for maximum facilitation of Bangladeshi students aspiring or already studying in Pakistani universities.

HEC Global Engagement Adviser Mr Azeem Ahmed and Project Director

(HRD) Jehanzeb Ali Khan also attended the meeting, the statement read.

During the meeting, the HEC chairman shed light on the prospects of direct academic and research connections between the higher education institutions of Pakistan and Bangladesh, the access of students and faculty exchange initiatives and scholarship programmes.

The press release said that Dr Mokhtar assured the vision of all-out support from HEC about extending maximum facilitation to Bangladeshi students who wish to study in Pakistan or those who are already enrolled in different programmes in Pakistani universities. — Staff Reporter



No. EE/PHE/Cash/Notice/2024-25 GOVERNMENT OF GILGIT BALTISTAN PUBLIC HEALTH ENGINEERING DIVISION COMMUNICATION & WORKS DEPARTMENT GILGIT

Gilgit Dated 17th March, 2025.

INVITATION TO BIDS (SSTE)

- The Gilgit Baltistan Communication & Works (GBC&WD) invites sealed tenders on single stage tow envelopes (SSTE) procedure (Comprising a single package containing two separate envelopes marked as "Technical proposal & financial proposal") for the following works from the eligible firms /Contractors licensed by Pakistan Engineering council in appropriate category/code valid upto 2025.

S#	Frame or work	Estimated Cost	Cost of Tender Form	2% Earnest Money	Date & Time of receipt/closing of bid	Date of time of opening of bid
1	Construction of protective bund at Palabed Chirmashass Gilgit	42702202/-	6000/-	854044/-	07.04.2025 12:00 PM	07.04.2025 12:30 PM

- A complete set of Bidding documents can be obtained by an Interested bidder personally on submission of written application alongwith relevant documents (PEC valid registration 2025, renewal fee receipt for 2024-25 CNIC and NOC for No Sick project certificate) & "No litigation certificate" from works Secretariat) from the office of Executive Engineer PHE Division near Tablighi Markaz / Eidgah Konodass Gilgit on production of Treasury Chalan duly deposit the cost of bidding documents (Non-Refundable as shown above on any working day during Office hours. Bidding documents shall not be issued on opening /closing date.

- All bids (Technical) must be accompanied by a bid security in shape of CDR (must be mentioning the name of contractor /firm) as stated above form scheduled bank of Pakistan and in case of rates quoted below 10% of T/S cost shall be required to provide alongwith (Financial Bid) and additional performance guarantee 50% of differential amount (between estimate estimated cost & Bid Cost) in favour of Executive Engineer PHE Division C&WD Gilgit and must be delivered to Executive Engineer PHE Division near Tablighi Markaz / Eidgah Konodass Gilgit on the date / time stated above and bids will be opened on the same day in the presence of bidders who chose to attend at the same address.

- Terms & conditions and qualification criteria are available in bidding documents.

Note:

All bidders must fill in check in list before submission of bid in their own interest as per instruction to bidders which is a mandatory requirement.

Gilgit-Baltistan Communication & works Department authorities reserves the right to reject any or all the proposals as per GB PPRA Rules.

(ENGR. MUHAMMAD TUFAIL)
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
PHE Division C&WD GILGIT
Phone (05811-920940)
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IDGB-186/25

Army officer who embraced martyrdom in Balochistan laid to rest in AJK

By Tariq Nazqash

MUZAFFARABAD: An army officer who embraced martyrdom while combating terrorism in Balochistan was laid to rest with full military honours in his native area in Anad, Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) on Wednesday.

Earlier, thousands of people gathered on the grounds of an educational institution in Bagh to attend the funeral of Maj Saad bin Zubair of Bari Passari village. The mourners included AJK Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwarul Haq, his predecessor Sardar Tanveer Ilyas, cabinet members Sardar Mir Akbar and Sardar Ziaul Qamar, as well as adviser Ahmed Nageen.

Commander of the 10th Corps Lt-Gen Shafiq Inayat, General Officer Commanding of the 12th Division, and other high-ranking civil and military officials were also present among the mourners.

Major Saad was the son of Sardar Zubair Ali Akbar, the

brother-in-law of Mr Ilyas, and the son-in-law of Sardar Arshad Hussain Tabir, Chairman of Union Council Jandala Tarnora. He had tied the nuptial knot in July last year.

Speaking at a condolence reference, local speakers paid tribute to Major Saad for embracing martyrdom in the line of duty, asserting that his sacrifice would not go in vain.

They maintained that such supreme sacrifices strengthened the nation's resolve and reinforced the belief in a peaceful and secure Pakistan for future generations.

The speakers noted that the entire nation stood united in the war against terrorism and remained steadfast in its support for the Pakistan Army.

They also highlighted the deep-rooted spiritual and blood ties between the people of Kashmir and Pakistan, underscoring that Kashmiris had always stood by Pakistan, while Pakistani soldiers had laid down their lives to pro-

tect Kashmir.

Prime Minister Haq also met the family of the martyred officer to offer his condolences. Paying tribute to Major Saad, he stated that the entire nation saluted sons like him, who selflessly shed their blood in the sacred duty of defending the homeland.

Meanwhile, AJK Legislative Assembly Speaker Chaudhry Latif Akbar and Information Minister Pir Mazhar Saeed Shah also paid homage to Major Saad, saying that while his martyrdom deeply grieved them, they took pride in the sons of Kashmir who had sacrificed their lives for the defence of the nation and the honour of the national flag.

They expressed their firm belief that terrorists would be completely defeated.

Expressing his condolences with the father of the martyred officer, Sardar Zubair Akbar, the speaker described Major Saad as a brave son of the soil who had attained immortality by laying down his life for the country.



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NEXT 24 HRS

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Maximum 32.0°C
Outlook Mainly Sunny

AQI

Maximum (Yesterday) 222

METRO Central

LAHORE RAMAZAN TIMING	
ROZAHANA	ROZAJEHA
Iftar (Today) 6:14pm	Iftar (Today) 6:24pm
Sahar (Tomorrow) 4:44am	Sahar (Tomorrow) 4:34am



WOMEN buy artificial jewellery inside Dohri Gate. — White Star

Jinnah Hospital pharmacy in crisis

Vendor says Rs140 million outstanding, hospital accuses him of overbilling

By Asif Chaudhry

LAHORE: The Jinnah Model Pharmacy (JMP) vendor of Jinnah Hospital may close down the pharmacy due to Rs140 million in outstanding payments. The hospital, however, has accused the vendor of overbilling under various heads, including medicines, medical devices, and other items.

The vendor has suspended the supply of medicines and equipment to critical patients. The delayed payment issue has persisted for over a year.

Earlier, two top officials of Mayo Hospital were removed during Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's visit two weeks ago due to a medicine short-

age related issue.

Jinnah Hospital is the second-largest public tertiary care teaching institute in the metropolitan city.

An official privy to the development said the functionality of the JMP has almost come to a standstill due to pending payments.

Regarding the background, he said the hospital's purchase section failed to float bulk purchase tenders for the financial year 2023-2024 on time, leading to the cancellation of most medicine procurement tenders.

To maintain hospital operations, the administration relied on medicine loans from the hospital-based JMP.

The official said cases related to the Sehat Sahulat Programme (SSP) were entirely covered for by the JMP, bringing the outstanding amount to Rs140 million.

The vendors have made multiple representations to the health department and the medical superintendent of Jinnah Hospital over the past six months

for payment settlement but to no avail.

They also wrote to Punjab Health Secretary Anwar Mahmood, but despite numerous reminders and follow-ups over the past year, the payments have not been processed.

"We provided cardiac devices, medicines, and other necessary items to the hospital for emergency treatment of newly patients, and the agreed payment terms have long passed since," reads the complaint.

Despite frequent requests, the hospital promised to clear the dues, but nothing has been done.

"Lastly, the hospital administration claimed it would take up the matter with the Board of Management (BoM)," the letter states.

The vendors claimed that although the hospital management had received funds, it neither discussed the matter in the BoM meeting nor cleared the outstanding payments.

"This delay is causing significant

financial strain on our operations, and we kindly request your intervention to expedite the settlement of the overdue amount," the letter reads.

The vendors said the issue of pending payments led to the transfer of the hospital's former finance director last year, but even his replacement, Haseeb Ahmad, has failed to resolve the matter.

An official stressed the need to increase Jinnah Hospital Lahore's pharma budget in light of the rising medicine prices and the imposition of sales tax in the 2024-2025 budget.

Mr Ahmad said the issue of pending liabilities is too complicated to resolve.

"We are still struggling to assess who was managing the financial affairs of the JMP," he said.

Regarding the clearance of outstanding vendor payments, he said the hospital management had directed instances of overbilling under various heads,

Continued on Page 14

Minar-i-Pakistan rally Punjab, dist govts' replies sought on PTI plea

LAHORE: The Lahore High Court on Wednesday sought replies from the provincial and district governments on a Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) petition seeking permission to hold a public gathering at Minar-i-Pakistan on March 22.

Justice Farooq Bakht heard the petition filed by PTI Punjab Vice President Anwar Khan Bari through Advocate Lutf Khosa.

The petitioner contended that despite a court order, the home secretary had not yet decided on the party's request for permission to hold a gathering.

He pointed out that the court had previously directed him to avail the first remedy by approaching the grievance redressal commission.

He said an application was submitted to the chief secretary of Punjab to avail the remedy, but the application had not been decided by the authority yet.

The petitioner stated that no information or notice had been received till date from the authority regarding the decision or any hearing of the application.

He said his party intended to hold a peaceful political gathering, but permission was not being granted.

The petitioner asked the court to direct the government to allow the gathering at Minar-i-Pakistan on March 22. The judge adjourned the hearing for Thursday (today). — Staff Reporter

PTI sows divisions on national security issues: Marriyum

By Our Staff Reporter

LAHORE: Punjab Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb said on Wednesday the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) always creates divisions on matters of national security and failed to demonstrate unity in the "war against terrorism".

"The PTI skipped the National Security Parliamentary Committee meeting despite the fact that national security is not an issue of a single party but the entire nation," Ms Aurangzeb said a greater harm.

Criticising PTI supremo Imran Khan, she said that during the party's tenure in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, he failed to formulate an effective counter-terrorism strategy and instead used every terrorism incident for political mileage.

Since the PTI decided against attending the high-level security huddle, many PM, N leaders have

been lashing out at the party for its "anti-state" decision.

The senior minister said KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur lacked independent decision-making power. "That is why a provincial security plan has yet to be formulated despite the KP being the province most affected by terrorism."

Ms Aurangzeb reaffirmed that the current government was taking all necessary steps to eliminate terrorism and that all provinces must implement strict measures in accordance with the national security policy.

She recalled that the PM, N government played a leading role in the fight against terrorism from 2013 to 2018 and once again the Shuhada Sharif government and military leadership would take a firm stand against terrorism.

She underscored that terrorists had no religion or ideology. "They (infidels) are simply enemies of the state and must be dealt

with firmly."

The minister said the PTI had been disengaging itself from national issues and relying on "false narratives to mislead the public".

"Those individuals [the PTI leaders] incite incidents like May 9, special propaganda against security forces, but when it comes to national security and development, they always retreat."

She asked that whenever a terrorist attack occurs in the country, the PTI shifts the blame onto

the government, while failing to build any infrastructure to combat terrorism in the KP.

Ms Aurangzeb urged the public to support the government and security forces in the fight against terrorism. "Pakistan's security is our collective responsibility, and every citizen must play their role in preserving it."

She also called upon the media to act responsibly, as it did in 2014, and to expose elements that strengthen terrorist narratives.

Corruption, inefficiency hallmarks of Maryam's one-year rule: PTI report

Party claims credit for almost all the initiatives of Punjab govt

By Mansoor Malik

LAHORE: The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's Punjab parliamentary party on Wednesday launched a report on Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's one year in power, alleging the period was replete with corruption, inefficiency and copying of the PTI government's projects.

The report, in a book form, presented by Opposition Leader in Punjab Assembly Malik Ahmad Khan Bhachar at an Iftar dinner on Wednesday, claims

"with facts and figures" that the Maryam government copied several projects launched during PTI rule. "The PTI Punjab parliamentary party has prepared this report after intensive research and can hold a debate on its authenticity with the Punjab government," Mr Bhachar asserted.

Contesting Punjab government's claim that it launched the Journalist Housing Scheme Phase-II and was paying Rs40 million to the Ravi Urban Development Authority (RUDA) for 3,200 residential plots, the opposition leader stated that this project was approved and launched by the PTI government on Dec 09, 2022, allocating 700 kared land for the purpose.

He stated that the Maryam government boasts of enacting the Punjab Delegation

Act 2024, without realising that the whole government copied a bill from the PTI and presented against it. He said the opposition in the Punjab Assembly submitted 23 amendments to the law, but none of them was considered.

He said the Maryam government claimed it increased Lahore Free Zone cash grant from Rs10 million to Rs15m, saying the PTI government had increased the cash grant from Rs5m to Rs10m in July, 2019.

Mr Bhachar said the PM, N government just claimed launching the Chief Minister Kisan Card and giving interest-free loans to farmers. He rejected the claim, saying that the scheme for farmers was launched by PM Imran Khan in April 2021, and pointed out "anomaly" in the project.

He also contested the Punjab govern-

ment claim of launching the CM's Green Tractor programme in the agriculture sector, saying the scheme was launched by his party in January 2019.

About the Punjab government's Rs15 billion Haseebur Scholarship programme for 30,000 students of public and private universities, the opposition leader said the PTI government had launched four such scholarship schemes. He added that in Nov 2019, PM Khan launched Undergraduate Scholarship programme and disbursed Rs50,000 scholarships to 200,000 students.

Questioning CM Maryam's claim of launching a free medicines project for cancer and heart patients, Mr Bhachar said the PTI government under its

Continued on Page 14

LHC removes blasphemy convict's appeal from hearing schedule

LAHORE: The hearing of an appeal against the death sentence of former university lecturer Junaid Hafeez could not take place on Wednesday as the case was removed from the cause list of a two-judge bench of the Lahore High Court (LHC).

According to the cause list issued on Saturday for the ongoing week, the appeal was scheduled to be heard on March 19 by a division bench comprising Justice Shahram Sarwar Chaudhry and Justice Saeed Akhtar Ali.

The appeal was listed as the last case on the "red cause list" of regular cases before the bench, which contained a total of eight cases. The LHC introduced red cause lists in 2015 to prioritize the disposal of old cases.

However, two days before the hearing, the appellant's counsel was informed by the LHC office via text message that the case had been rescheduled.

The updated cause list, published on the LHC website and mobile application, showed that only the last case had been removed from the bench's schedule.

Hafeez — a former visiting lecturer at the Department of English Literature of the Bahauddin Zakariya University (BZU) — was arrested by police on March 13, 2013, and his trial started in 2014.

He was sentenced to death by a Multan district and sessions court on Dec 21, 2019, on blasphemy charges. His appeal against the sentence has been pending since 2020.

— Staff Reporter

Work on Akbari Mandi's restoration begins

LAHORE: The restoration of the historic Akbari Spice Market has begun.

The project includes the reconstruction of the ancient Akbari Gate and improvements to the market's infrastructure. The Walled City of Lahore Authority (WCLA) is overseeing its implementation," said Senior Minister Maryam Aurangzeb.

"This project aims at preserving Lahore's historical heritage and serves as a major milestone in boosting the economy and tourism. Shop signboards and spice racks will be redesigned, while walkways for pedestrians will remain open, with enhanced accessibility facilities," the minister said.

WCLA Director General Kamran Lashari said the reconstruction of the ancient Akbari Gate will help revive its historical significance.

"Solar lights will be installed to provide an eco-friendly lighting system in the old city. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz is personally overseeing this project to modernize Lahore's cultural and commercial hub, ensuring better facilities for citizens," he said.

The project will be completed at a cost of Rs299.61 million. — Staff Reporter

Five die, 12 injured in bus-van collision

GHINOT: Five people were killed and 12 others injured as a result of a collision between a bus and a passenger van near Bus Stand Lajan Town.

Reports said the bus was carrying sugar mill employees to their homes after their shift when it collided head-on with a van travelling from Sargodha to Faisalabad. As a result five van passengers were killed on the spot, while 12 others sustained serious injuries.

Rescue 1122 ambulances shifted the injured to Lajan THQ Hospital and Ghinot DHQ Hospital. Some victims were in a critical condition, prompting authorities to declare an emergency in both hospitals and call in additional medical staff.

The accident was caused by speeding from both vehicles.

The passenger van was completely destroyed, and rescue teams had to cut through the wreckage to retrieve the dead and injured. Further investigation is under way. — Correspondent

Eid holidays

LAHORE: The Punjab government on Wednesday announced three-day holidays for Eidul Fitr from March 31 to April 2.

According to a notification, the government will observe March 31 to April 2 (Monday to Wednesday) as public holidays on the occasion of Eidul Fitr.

However, the announcement of the moon sighting will determine the date for Eidul Fitr celebrations. — Staff Reporter

Woman, son suffer burns in house fire

By Our Correspondent

TORA TEK SINGHA woman and her son suffered burns when an LPG cylinder exploded due to a gas leakage in their house in Mohalla Mangarwala, Sherkot Cantonment, on Wednesday.

Rescue 1122 used electronics, furniture, clothes, and other valuables were also burnt. The fire was controlled after a hectic struggle.

The injured, Parveen Bibi (50) and her son Ahmad (15), were shifted to Sherkot THQ Hospital, where doctors referred them to the burn unit of Allied Hospital, Faisalabad.

Meanwhile, in Faisalabad's Model Bazaar on Jhang Road, a fire broke out due to a short circuit in a shop, which spread throughout the market, reducing at least 60 shops to ashes.

A press release said six fire tenders took part in the operations, and the fire was controlled after three hours.

The loss to shopkeepers is estimated in millions, but no casualties were reported.

RESCUED: Military

Three police in Faisalabad rescued kidnapped Muhammad Ahmad on Wednesday after arresting extortion gang head Zameer Bhikhar Shikhan.

Reports said the six-point had demanded extortion money from the abductees, and when he failed to pay, Shikhan

kidnapped him at gunpoint from his house a few days ago.

Police have registered a case against the accused and his five accomplices.

KILLS BROTHER: A man murdered his younger brother over a property dispute in Chak 119 JR, Faisalabad, on Wednesday.

Suspect Mujahid Saleem died after a fight with his brother. He had an argument at home over their property share, when Saleem suddenly opened fire and injured his brother.

He was shifted to Allied Hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries. Miller Town police have arrested the accused.

PML-N LEADER: Punjab PML-N Ullema Wing Senior Vice President and defeated NA-110 candidate Asif Murtaza Shah has expressed concern over corruption in government departments, despite his party being in power.

In a statement on Wednesday, he said although his party workers belonged to the ruling party, they were forced to pay bribes in all government departments, even for legitimate matters.

"I obtained 105,000 votes, but when I approached officials for the rights of my voters, my case is ignored," he said, urging the chief minister and prime minister to address the genuine complaints of legal party workers.

SHO suspended for illegal detention of three persons

By Our Correspondent

SARGODHA: District Police Officer (DPO) Muhammad Ashraf suspended the Factory Area station house officer (SHO) from service for the illegal confinement of three people.

According to sources, the DPO paid a surprise visit to the police station on Tuesday night to inspect cleanliness, building conditions, property cases and the front desk.

He also reviewed police records and found three people unlawfully detained over a financial dispute.

The DPO suspended the SHO from service, saying that any violation of law and order would not be tolerated.

KILLED: A 30-year-old woman was killed after a speeding school bus hit a motorcycle in Satellite Town Block D.

According to sources, Imran Bibi was riding a motorcycle when the bus belonging to the Government Special Education School struck

her near a petrol pump on General Ben Staid Road.

Her body was shifted to DHO Teaching Hospital. Police have launched an investigation into the incident.

TRAPPED: Two women got trapped inside a bank ATM cabin when the door locked while they were withdrawing money near Nouri Gate Hussain Chowk in the city.

Rescue team contacted the bank manager, who unlocked an alternate door to free the trapped women.

KILLED: Police have arrested two suspects involved in the fatal shooting of a young man at a chicken shop in the city.

According to sources, on March 14, two armed assailants opened fire at a chicken shop in Block 13, killing Mohsin Joyta of Farina Jinnah Colony. The suspects, identified as Sahil and Waseem, had the same but were later arrested by police.

Investigations revealed that the murder occurred from an old enmity.



LAHORE: Tuff tires being laid at Gawalmandi Food Street. — White Star

ACE files case against five for fraudulent land transfer

By Our Correspondent

SAHIWALI: The local circle office of the Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) registered a case against five individuals, including officials from the Chakwani Tehsil Court and the Land Record Revenue Department, for fraudulently transferring a six kanal and two marla piece of agricultural land located at Village 43/12-L.

The case was registered on the complaint of Syeda Zahra Khan. The land belongs to Mahmooda Begum who died in 1984 and is the grandmother of the complainant. The land was unlawfully transferred to Ali Hussain Nagri, a retired assistant commissioner (AC), and resident of the same village.

It is alleged that Nagri, in collusion

with four others, forged a bogus land transfer deed. Those involved in the case include: Syed Ali Hussain Nagri - retired AC, resident of Village 43/12-L; Tanzeer Ahmed - court stenographer; Sikandar Ali - court stenographer; Akbar Akbar - advocate practicing at Tehsil Court and employee of the Copy Branch, Revenue Department.

The accused were charged under Sections 420, 468, and 471, of PPC as well as PCA Section 5/4-47, following an inquiry (SIAC/Dep-240/2024, 855) concluded in late February 2025. The land, listed under Khawat No. 1 and Khatooni No. 1-4, was originally owned by Mahmooda Begum, who had a son, Fakhar Bakhtari. However, Fakhar Bakhtari produced her, leaving Syeda Zahra as the sole heir.

Investigations revealed that on Jan

15, 2021, Nagri and his accomplices fraudulently declared Mahmooda Begum to be alive. Using this fabricated claim, they created a fake gift deed and transferred the land to Nagri after a payment of Rs1.6 million. The fraudulent transfer was later formalised on April 5, 2024, under fake land transfer deed No. 1111.

Syeda Zahra remained unaware of the land transfer until early March 2025, when she discovered the fraud while dealing with Tehsil Court and the Revenue Department. She provided official death certificates of both her grandmother and father to establish her rightful ownership of the land.

Following her complaint, the ACE Sahiwal conducted an investigation and registered the case on March 16, 2025.

NAILED: The Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE), Circle Office,

arrested Karam Elahi, a clerk from the Sub-Division Buildings Department, for accepting a Rs6,000 bribe from Mahmooda Begum, a resident of Village 188/7-R, on Monday evening.

According to reports, Tahir sought a building fitness certificate for his private school, Islamia Public School. However, Karam Elahi demanded Rs10,000 for issuing the certificate. After negotiations, the deal was settled at Rs6,000.

Tahir reported the matter to Muhammad Sahib, Circle Officer (CO), ACE. Acting on the complaint, a sting operation was planned. Tahir handed over the money in the presence of Judicial Magistrate Sardar Umer Hassan, who immediately arrested the clerk with the signed currency notes as evidence.

Monitoring centre to oversee immunisation programme

By Our Correspondent

DERA GHAZI KHAN: A control and command centre has been established under the supervision of the World Health Organization (WHO) to monitor the Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI).

Former health adviser and MPA Muhammad Raheel Pasha, along with Health CEO Muhammad Farhan Mehmood inaugurated the centre. The ceremony was attended by relevant officials.

Mr Pasha stressed the importance of timely vaccination to protect children from twelve deadly diseases, stating that the establishment of the monitoring and evaluation cell would ensure effective oversight of the immunisation programme.

He urged health depart-

ment officials and field staff to play an active role in safeguarding the younger generation from life-threatening diseases.

He also called on parents to cooperate with health teams and ensure their children complete the vaccination course on time. The initiative aims to strengthen the immunisation programme and improve public health outcomes in the region.

RALLY: A rally was held to raise awareness about the rising number of AIDS cases among children, with participants expressing deep concern over the alarming situation.

The event saw a large turnout, including parents of affected children and local citizens.

Prominent political and social leaders, including Rashida Farhan Mehmood,

Farhan Mehmood, PMA leaders, child specialist Dr. Gul Muhammad Qasim, social activists Zulfikar Baloch and Nawazish Baloch, political figure Mehr Sadia Karim and Main Mune Khali, took part in the rally.

Dr. Qasim, in his address, described the emergence of AIDS cases among children as extremely worrisome. He revealed that affected children had been seeking treatment at the government hospital in Tamsa, raising questions about the source of the infections. Speakers at the rally demanded an investigation into the causes and called for those responsible to be held accountable.

Participants urged the government to establish an AIDS control centre in Tamsa and appealed to Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz to take notice of the issue.

DGK security situation reviewed

By Our Correspondent

DERA GHAZI KHAN: Security situation at DG Khan border area along Balochistan and KP was reviewed virtually at a meeting here on Wednesday.

Chaired by Commissioner Aftab Ahmed Chaudhry, it was attended by deputy commissioners, DPOs, and other relevant

officers.

The commissioner emphasised the need to further tighten security measures in Dera Ghazi Khan division given the current situation in KP and Balochistan. He ordered strict monitoring of provincial border routes.

The meeting concluded with a resolve to enhance coordination among all stakeholders to ensure peace in the region.

Police recover child, arrest captor

MUZAFFARGARH: Chuk Anam police have recovered a kidnapped child and arrested the captor.

Reports said Shazia Bibi, a resident of Chuk Anam, told the police that her son, Mohammed Noorani, a second-grade student, worked after school to support his family due to his father's illness.

She stated that on March 3, Noorani returned home from school and later went to the city area for work but never came back.

A police team conducted multiple raids and recovered the child from the suspect a few days after the abduction.

The child was safely handed over to his mother. — Staff Reporter

Role of entrepreneurship for job creation stressed

By Our Correspondent

TORA TEK SINGHA: In the face of increasing unemployment and brain drain, it is a prerequisite to refurbish the business and entrepreneurship skills in the youth to curtail the tendency and to enable them to become job providers rather than job seekers.

These views were expressed by experts at a one-day workshop on "The Researcher Compass: From Skills to Social Responsibility and Society Building Version 1" organised by the Pak-Korea Nutrition Center (PKNC), Faculty of Food Nutrition and Home Sciences (FFNHS), in collaboration with Business Incubation Center (BIC) and National Incubation Center (NIC) at the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad (UAF).

Dr Imran Pasha, dean FFNHS, said even developed countries are not offering complete job opportunities to its public but they support entrepreneurship for young generations.

He emphasised the need for researchers to consider the broader social implications of their work. "As researchers, we have a responsibility to ensure that our work benefits society as a whole, an entrepreneur can easily commercialise his research and can also become a job provider rather than job seeker."

Dr Bhikhar Ahmed, director BIC,

UAF, while highlighting the role of business incubation in supporting startups said their business incubation provides a supportive ecosystem for startups to grow and "we are committed to providing our entrepreneurs with the resources and expertise they need to succeed. The BIC is offering a free-of-cost working space equipped with all necessities for entrepreneurs to grow their business."

Amin Shafiq, NRC programme manager, said entrepreneurship is crucial in driving economic growth with innovation. The entrepreneurship is a key to turning research into reality, and NRC is offering our researchers with the skills and support necessary to succeed in this space.

Dr Mian Kamran Shafiq, associate professor, stated that the workshop aimed to equip researchers and entrepreneurs with the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate the complexities of research and innovation, while also emphasising the importance of social responsibility and society building.

The workshop featured a range of interactive sessions and presentations from experts.

MINORITIES: The Minorities Alliance Pakistan (MAP) extends its unwavering support to the national-level decisions taken to eradicate terrorism from the country. "We deeply mourn the loss of innocent lives, including civilians and military personnel, in the Jaffar Express tragedy," said

Chairman of the Minorities Alliance Pakistan (MAP) Akmal Bhatti at Faisalabad on Wednesday.

He said: "We condemn the unwavering commitment of our brave armed forces to eliminate terrorism and extremism and we stand united in their efforts to safeguard Pakistan's peace and security."

He said a stable and strong Pakistan is the guarantee of a secure future for all its citizens. He expressed that 'genetic' leadership from minority communities was not included in these crucial decisions taken recently. "We believe that consultations with marginalised communities should have been included in the anti-terrorism campaign. We have diligently fought for national interests in the fields of defence, education, health, and politics. Every member of our community is ready to make any sacrifice to protect our homeland. Whenever needed, we will be available for the sake of national security and interests."

He said time has come to expose true representation of marginalised communities, including political leaders and parties, to play their role. Minorities have also suffered from terrorism and have borne the brunt of the fight against terrorism and extremism. "We have paid the price in terms of lives and property. Our churches, temples, gurdwaras, and other places of worship will hold special prayers for the protection of Pakistan and its security."

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PESHAWAR

Sunset 06:27pm
Sunrise (Tomorrow) 06:14am

NEXT 24 HRS

Minimum 19°C
Maximum 32°C
Outlook Mainly Sunny

METRO
North

PESHAWAR RAMAZAN TIMING	
Wah (Today)	Wah (Today)
8:28pm	8:28pm
Sate (Tomorrow)	Sate (Tomorrow)
4:52am	4:42am



PEOPLE buy shoes for Eid at a stall in Peshawar's Hashtragni market on Wednesday. — White Star

Police to replace security forces in areas with low terror threats

Cabinet also okays draft changes to law to strengthen commission on status of women

By Umar Farooq

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa cabinet on Wednesday approved replacing security forces with police in areas with low terrorist threat.

Officials told Dawn that under the Composite Security Model, the police would play the leading role in areas with lower terrorist threat, with security forces acting in emergency situations only.

They said the police would lead security management in Buner and Upper Chitral districts in the next 15 days.

Officials also said that the security forces would still play a lead role in security manage-

ment in highly volatile areas of southern districts.

They said that under the Composite Security Model, which was earlier approved by the apex committee, the police would be equipped with arms, ammunition and modern gadgets.

The cabinet, which met with Chief Minister Ali Amin Khan Gandapur in the chair, approved Rs567.7 million under CSM for the police department to procure equipment, according to an official statement.

It also decided that the provincial government would avail itself of the Saudi Fund for Development funding of \$30 million for Malakand Infrastructure Project if the federal government provided it as grant and not loan.

The forum also approved the draft Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sentencing (Amendment) Act, 2025, which provides for bringing consistency in the judgments regarding sentencing and better implementation.

It approved Rs25.028 million

and exemption of rendering services for Ramadan Dastarkhwan for the current fiscal year in line with Section 14(1)(b) of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Public Procurement

Regulatory Authority (KPPRA) Act 2012, Rules 2014, in the "best public interest as normal procedure for procurement of food taken time," according to the statement. Under the scheme during the month of fasting, free Sahar and Iftar meals are provided to all those individuals who are stationed with patients in DHQ and THQ hospitals.

The cabinet also gave approval to the appointment of non-official members of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Medical Transplantation Regulatory Authority. The three-year tenure of the seven non-official members of the authority had expired on Sept 3, 2023.

Under Section 5(6) of the Act, the authority will consist of 11 members, including eight non-official and three official mem-

bers, including the health minister, secretary health and administrator of the regulatory authority.

As per sub-sections 5 and 6 of the Act's Section 5, the government may appoint one member against each specialty as non-official members for a period of three years. The authority regulates, monitors and controls all transplantation of human organs and various committees under the Act besides recognizing medical institutions and hospitals for practice of operative surgery in transplantation of human organs.

The cabinet also approved the inclusion of the construction of a RCC bridge to connect Jamban Barikot with Main Karamat Road in Upper Dir district in the upcoming Annual Development Programme. It allowed the grant of the approved Rs7 million (Rs2.5 million already approved and reimbursed and Rs4.5 million additional grant to Shahwan Billa, the mother of Mr Hamain, who is undergoing

lungs transplant abroad.

The forum ordered the holding of open katcharis to obtain the views of stakeholders for detachment of Darshi and Matsikhel villages from Bardsi District Shah tehsil in Karak district and attachment thereof with Thall tehsil in Hangu district.

It also approved funds for clearing the facilities of controlled hospitals in Bagar, Ghilje, Manto Gai, Mula Khan Sarai, Tot Khela and Darazinda, rural health centres in Garom Chaudhwa and Mastoi, and gave the go-ahead for the establishment of Jawan Market in Karak district.

The cabinet granted approval to the draft amendments to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Commission on the Status of Women Act, 2016, which aims at strengthening the working of the commission. The commission oversees implementation of laws, policies and programmes related to women and propose new measures where there exist gaps.

Four children among six killed in Khyber incidents

By Our Correspondent

KHYTEER: A tribal elder was among six persons killed in three different incidents in Bana on Wednesday, the police said.

They said that Malik Naseeb Khan of Sepah tribe was busy shopping in the main Bana Bazaar when a young boy fired multiple shots at him from behind, leaving him critically injured. The elder succumbed to his injuries while being taken to a hospital.

Family sources said that a son of the tribal elder was also accompanying him, but he was parking his car nearby when the shots were fired.

They said that though they were still not sure as to who was behind the killing they conceded that they had an old enemy.

The police registered a case against the unknown assailant and started investigations.

Meanwhile, four children were killed and six others were injured when the boundary wall of a house collapsed in Charsadda village of Madakhel, Bana, due to strong winds.

The deceased were identified as Kamran, Abdullah, Bilal and Usman, and the injured included Hamza, Adnan, Ehsan, Haseeb, Shoaib and Mazur, who were shifted to a hospital.

Also in Bana, a teenage boy, identified as Ahmed, died by suicide.

Family sources of the 16-year-old said that he had been under mental stress for last few days, and ultimately ended his life by shooting himself with a pistol.

Curfew lifted in South Waziristan

By Our Correspondent

SOUTH WAZIRISTAN: Curfew imposed for a day in Upper South Waziristan district was lifted on Wednesday evening.

Deputy commissioner Saleem Jan said that main roads that were closed from 6am to 6pm were reopened to traffic.

The routes included from Aziz Abad Chowk to Sarvekal and Jandota, as well as the roads from Spun Juvat to Lacha and from Bibi Raghuai to Kotkar and Jandota.

The deputy commissioner told Dawn that the curfew had been imposed due to security concerns and potential threats.

"However, with the situation now normalised, the curfew has been lifted," he added.

It is important to note that the security situation in both Lower and Upper South Waziristan districts has significantly deteriorated over the past year, with an increase in terrorist activities, including bombings, targeted killing, and attacks on police and security forces' checkpoints.

Universal digital payment system to be launched

CM says initiative to strengthen financial security, encourage investment

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has decided to launch the "Cashless Khyber Pakhtunkhwa," a universal digital payment system for all types of transactions and business payments in the province.

A comprehensive strategy has been devised to implement this system, assigning clear responsibilities with timelines to various departments, institutions and district administrations, according to an official statement issued here.

It added that under the initiative, digi-

tal payments would be made mandatory for all types of private and public transactions, as well as for small and large businesses.

"The implementation of this system will facilitate not only business owners but also the general public by streamlining payment processes. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa will become the first province in the country to introduce such a cashless system. The Universal Digital Payment System will be established in collaboration with mobile companies that provide online payment services," read the statement.

It also said the digital payment system would also be functional in offline modes.

As part of the implementation, data collection will be carried out at the village council level, covering all shops, stalls, vendors and kiosks, according to officials.

The statement said that under the Cashless Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Initiative, it would be mandatory for all businesses, public transport services, and commercial centres to display QR codes for digital payments.

"To ensure the effective implementation of the system, a robust regulatory framework will be enforced. A structured mechanism will be devised under the leadership of district administrations to guarantee the smooth execution of this initiative, complemented by an extensive public awareness campaign.

Also, training programmes and support services will be provided to both business owners and the general public. For monitoring and evaluation purposes, a dashboard will be set up in partnership between the provincial government and mobile wallet service providers.

The Chief Minister's Secretariat, the Finance Department, the IT Board, the PMRU, and district administrations will oversee performance tracking and regu-

lar reporting.

Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Ali Amin Gandapur ordered the implementation of the Cashless Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Initiative, according to the statement.

In a statement, the chief minister described the universal digital payment system as a revolutionary step by the provincial government and said the Cashless Initiative was an integral part of the Digital Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Programme.

He said the system would align the province with international digital payment standards and promote efficient and transparent financial transactions.

The chief minister said the digital payment system would enhance financial transparency, support economic growth, eliminate fraud and corruption, improve tax collection, create a business-friendly environment and encourage private investment in the province.

PHC seeks govt's response to plea of Shakil Afridi's family against travel restrictions

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court on Wednesday issued notice to federal government, seeking its response to plea of wife and children of Dr Shakil Afridi, who challenged placing of their names in different travel restriction lists.

A bench consisting of Justice Syed Arshad Ali and Justice Farah Javed directed that the respondents including ministry of interior and defence should file replies to the petition jointly filed by Dr Shakil's wife Sarana Shakil and his three

children, requesting to declare as illegal placement of their names in Passport Control List (PCL) and Provisional National Identification List (PNIL) by the government.

Advocate Arif Jan Afridi appeared for the petitioners and stated that they were earlier placed in Exit Control List (ECL) by federal government. He added that on Nov 16, 2023, the high court declared the said act of government as illegal and ordered removing their names from ECL.

He said that ministry of interior issued an order on June 14, 2024, through which their names were removed from ECL.

However, he said that government now placed their names in PCL and PNIL and put restriction on their travelling abroad.

He argued that the petitioners had given applications to relevant officials for redressing their grievance but no response was given to them. He contended that the petitioners were law abiding citizens and never indulged in any crime. He added that if any illegality was committed by Dr Shakil Afridi, his spouse and children could not be made liable for it.

The additional attorney general, Samiullah Khan, said that the petitioners had not included the ministry of defence as

respondent in the petition. He asked that the said ministry may be made a party in the case and be issued notice. The bench decided to make the ministry of defence a respondent in the petition.

Dr Shakil Afridi, a central character accused of helping American CIA in tracing Al Qaeda chief Osama bin Laden, has previously been serving 23-year prison term in Sahawal Central Jail.

Following the 2023 order of the high court that declared placing of petitioners' names in ECL illegal, federal government filed a review petition that was also disposed of in June 2024.

The high court had pointed out

that in Para 19 of the detailed judgement the bench clearly mentioned that if federal government still felt that it possessed sufficient material regarding the alleged involvement of petitioner (Dr Shakil's wife) and her children in the anti-state activities, reasons best known to them, didn't share with the court, could on the basis of that material proceed against them under the law to bring them to justice.

That bench had not aside the impugned memorandum of federal government of Dec 24, 2011, and ordered to remove their names from ECL and to release their passports.

Traffic official injured in Charsadda firing

By Our Correspondent

CHARSADDA: A traffic police constable was injured when unknown miscreants riding a motorcycle opened fire at him in Umarzal Bazaar here on Wednesday, the police said.

They said that armed bike riders opened indiscriminate fire in the crowded bazaar in the morning, injuring traffic police officer Salman Khan, who was on duty there.

He sustained serious wounds and was taken to the District Headquarters Hospital, wherefrom he was referred to the Lady Reading Hospital, Peshawar, in precarious condition.

The police said that the firing caused a stampede in the bazaar and the suspects fled on their motorcycle while displaying a pistol and firing in the air – a video of which also went viral on social media.

As soon as the incident was reported, police officials reached the spot and collected evidence from the crime scene.

SHO Umarzal police station Gaiser Khan lodged FIR at the Counter-Terrorism Department police station against unknown accused under sections 7 ATA, 353 and 324.

He said that the suspects came on a sp-off and attacked the traffic police officer

Immediately after the incident, the police cordoned off the area and started a search for the attackers.

PRAYER

Fajr	04:58
Zuhar	12:24
Asr	04:43
Maghrib	06:56
Isha	07:49

Starting time in Peshawar

REFLECTIONS

TO EXPRESS A FEELING AND HELP LESS PERSON IN THE WORST FORM OF POVERTY. 33

— HAZRAT ALE (A.S.)

784427

Chitral's security situation discussed

CHITRAL: The participants of a security conference here on Wednesday decided to deal with iron hand those social media users, who posted investigative and inflammatory material on their pages to create social and commercial unrest in the area.

The conference was organised jointly by Chitral Scouts, district administrations and police of Lower Chitral and Upper Chitral. Headed by commander of Chitral Scouts, the conference was aimed at working out a solid joint strategy to avert and abort any act of subversive activity in the area, keeping in view the prevailing circumstances in the country marred by a wave of terrorism.

Discussions were made on the possible security situation in the area during the upcoming season of tourism and a host of measures were recommended to be taken to tackle it effectively.

The decisions to be jointly implemented by different institutions included that of carrying out monitoring operation in Drush and Chitral city, tightening the reconnaissance process of foreign nationals and enhancing police patrolling around the camps of Afghan refugees.

It was also decided to strengthen arm forces already by the joint team and increasing the strength of Chitral Scouts. Those in attendance were deputy commissioners and district police officers of both Lower Chitral and Upper Chitral as well as the officers of law enforcement agencies. — Correspondent

Bajaur jirga calls for early reopening of trade routes with Afghanistan

By Our Correspondent

BAJAUR: Participants of a jirga held here on Wednesday expressed concern about the delay in reopening of the border routes with Afghanistan, which has hit trade and people's movement.

Awami National Party convened the Quami Jirga in Nawagai Bazaar, located near the Mohmand district.

Elders, clerics, political and business leaders, youth leaders and social activists attended the meeting, according to a statement.

ANP MP, Nisar Khan, local chapter president Gul Afzal Khan, central leader Maslana Khanzai, and party workers Sheikh Janjua, Shah Nasser Khan, Saqat Saif Akhtar, Mohammad Imran, All Bajaur Political Parties Alliance (including chairman Qazi Abdul Mannan, trade leaders Sahibzada Mahesh Jain and Quresh Khan were among those who spoke on the occasion.

They highlighted the significance of the reopening of the border routes for socioeconomic development of local residents.

Nawa Pasa, Chakhi Pasa and Latzi Pasa are the major trade routes Bajaur has with Afghanistan. However, they had been closed since 2007 due to security reasons, said the statement issued by Ghazi Khan Nasser, the party's Bajaur information secretary.

The speakers said that the prolonged closure of border points was impacting the local economy as these had long been used for trade and people's movement.

The speakers said reopening of these points, especially Nawa Pasa, would also benefit the Mahabadi division and the neighbouring Mohmand district.

The speakers asked governments in Pakistan and Afghanistan to take tangible steps for the early reopening of the three border routes.

The speakers expressed anguish at the reports that about 1,300 stu-

dents from different areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including Bajaur, who were studying in medical colleges in Afghanistan, had been stranded there due to the closure of Torkham border.

The speakers urged both the central and provincial governments to take immediate steps to ensure their safe return to their homeland.

The participants also lashed out at the provincial government for denying development funds to ANP MP, Nisar Khan.

The jirga participants also expressed concern over the growing incidents of terrorism in the province, calling on the government to take effective measures to restore peace and stability in the region.

The participants also urged local authorities to restore mobile phone service in Chamaikatal, Karamagora and other mountainous areas.

The jirga concluded with a resolution, asking the government to take immediate steps to address the issues highlighted at the forum.

Mardan varsity forms body to probe harassment case

By Our correspondent

MARDAN: The Woman University Mardan Vice-Chancellor Prof Safia Ahmad has constituted an inquiry committee to investigate a harassment incident that allegedly occurred on the varsity's Bashehail campus a few days ago.

Hazrat Bilal, the public relations officer of the vice-chancellor, said on Wednesday that the eight-member committee was constituted after students boycotted classes and held demonstrations against the varsity's security in charge for his alleged involvement in the harassment case.

He said the committee had been tasked with carrying out free and fair investigations into the case so that stern action could be taken against the official responsible.

He said the committee consisted of two focal persons, three inquiry members and three appellate members. "As per the instructions and rules of the Higher Education Commission, the focal persons shall take appropriate steps to provide interim measures that may be requested by the affected persons or as otherwise may be deemed appropriate," Mr Bilal said.

"The inquiry members shall be responsible for the investigations and adjudication of any complaint received

in connection with the violation of the HEC policy," he added.

"The appellate members may consider the appeal and any other relevant material or modify the probe body's decision within 30 days in respect of which such appeal is made, and shall communicate the decision to both the parties, the VC and the inquiry committee," the official maintained.

Mr Bilal claimed the vice-chancellor had suspended the security in-charge to ensure fair and impartial inquiry.

"As per the university regulations the suspended official has been directed not to visit the university premises and must remain available for any inquiry proceedings as and when required," he added.

Mr Bilal also claimed that parents of the affected student of the English department had neither filed a written complaint to the relevant university officials nor to the police station concerned against her alleged harassment.

He said when the varsity administration contacted the father of the student to register a complaint he refused by saying that no harassment incident had taken place.

Mr Bilal said that the student's father told university officials that his daughter was suffering from anxiety as she had not slept properly for two days, and that was why she was not feeling well in the varsity.

LETTER OF INVITATION

Ajkd Jammu & Kashmir Electricity Department (AJKED) invites sealed proposal(s) from the eligible consultancy firms (individual firm or joint venture) for carrying out Feasibility Study for construction of following Grid Station and Transmission Line:

Project Name	Bid Security (Rs.)
"132/11KV Grid Station with allied 132KV Transmission Line to be constructed at Ghari Dupatta, District Muzaffargarh, AJK" and "Detailed Survey and Sub-Station Investigation of 132KV Transmission Line from 132/11KV Ghari Dupatta Substation Grid Station to proposed 132/11KV Ghari Dupatta Grid Station"	Rs. 360,000/-

FOLLOWING ELIGIBILITY CONDITIONS/QUALIFICATION CRITERIA SHALL APPLY:

- The consultancy firm should have a valid PEC Registration having specialization code 1201, 1208(g).
- The consultancy firm should be registered with FBR/IRD AJK for Income Tax & Sales Tax and should be on active Tax Payer List.
- The consultancy firm must have at least Five (05) years' experience and should have provided consultancy services of at least One (1) Feasibility Study or Consultancy of Construction Supervision of (132/11KV or above) Grid Station/Transmission Line.
- Average Annual Turnover of the consultancy firm for the last Five (05) Years should not be less than Rs. 50.5 million.

TECHNICAL CONDITIONS:

- Bidding shall be carried out on "Single Stage Two Envelope" Bidding Procedure.
- The selection of the consultancy firm will be based on "Least Cost Method" as per criteria described in the RFP.
- The Proposal(s) shall be valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical Proposal(s).
- Bid Security as mentioned above must be attached with Technical Proposal, in shape of COR/Bank Draft/Pay Order/Bank Guarantee issued by a scheduled bank of Pakistan, in favor of Chief Engineer (Electricity), Muzaffargarh, AJK Electricity Department, valid for 28 days beyond the validity of the Proposal(s).
- Offered rates should be quoted inclusive of all taxes & duties applicable in AJK except GST.
- Income Tax, Tajweed-ul-Quran Tax, Education Cess, KUC and all other applicable taxes including General Sales Tax (if Applicable) shall be deducted from the invoice(s) of the successful/Consultancy Firm(s).
- Interested eligible consultancy firms may obtain further information and purchase complete set of RFP from office of the Deputy Director (Planning & Monitoring) AJKED, Muzaffargarh during office hours from 20-March-2025 to 16-April-2025 on submission of following:
 - Written application on Official Letter Head of firm duly signed & stamped by authorized person.
 - Authority Letter on Official Letter Head of firm duly signed & stamped by authorized person in favor of authorized person who purchases the RFP.
 - Verifiable copy of valid PEC registration certificate having specialization code 1201, 1208(g).
 - Payment of non-refundable fee of Rs. 3,000/- (Printing Charges) per set of RFP.
- The Proposal(s) prepared in accordance with the instructions of the RFP must reach at the office of the Chief Engineer Electricity, Muzaffargarh (Chairman Departmental Purchase Committee) on or before 11:55AM on 17-April-2025. Technical Proposal(s) will be opened on the same day at 11:55AM in presence of consultancy firm representative(s) who choose to attend.
- The consultants are expected to inform themselves fully of all aspects of the assignment, required consultancy services for the Project(s) and the local conditions before submitting the Proposal(s) by paying a visit to the Project site(s) and sending written queries to the undersigned.
- AJKED will not be responsible for any cost or expenses incurred by the Consultants in connection with the preparation or delivery of the Proposal(s).
- All mandatory Terms & Conditions are mentioned in the RFP.
- Blacklisted Firms / Companies / Suppliers / Distributors / Contractors / Bidders are prohibited for participation and all bidders shall furnish an affidavit/declaration to declare that they are neither blacklisted nor in conflict with Government anywhere in the territory of State of the AJK, Federally administered areas or Islamic Republic of Pakistan.
- The Evaluation Report Award of Contract shall also be displayed on AJK PPA website.
- This advertisement is also available at AJK PPA website. (www.ajkppa.gov.pk)

Chief Engineer (Electricity)
AJK Electricity Department,
AJKED House, Airport Road, Charipan Chowk,
Muzaffargarh, AJK. Ph: 05822-520634

AJK 100-0-03/2025

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COURT NOTICE

ISLAMABAD

NATIONAL Industrial Relations Commission Islamabad Dated: 10-03-2025. Appeal No. 124/04/2025 G-40-Sohail & Co. Vs. Ghulam Qadir No. 1, Ghulam Qadir No. 2, No. 3, No. 4, No. 5, No. 6, No. 7, No. 8, No. 9, No. 10, No. 11, No. 12, No. 13, No. 14, No. 15, No. 16, No. 17, No. 18, No. 19, No. 20, No. 21, No. 22, No. 23, No. 24, No. 25, No. 26, No. 27, No. 28, No. 29, No. 30, No. 31, No. 32, No. 33, No. 34, No. 35, No. 36, No. 37, No. 38, No. 39, No. 40, No. 41, No. 42, No. 43, No. 44, No. 45, No. 46, No. 47, No. 48, No. 49, No. 50, No. 51, No. 52, No. 53, No. 54, No. 55, No. 56, No. 57, No. 58, No. 59, No. 60, No. 61, No. 62, No. 63, No. 64, No. 65, No. 66, No. 67, No. 68, No. 69, No. 70, No. 71, No. 72, No. 73, No. 74, No. 75, No. 76, No. 77, No. 78, No. 79, No. 80, No. 81, No. 82, No. 83, No. 84, No. 85, No. 86, No. 87, No. 88, No. 89, No. 90, No. 91, No. 92, No. 93, No. 94, No. 95, No. 96, No. 97, No. 98, No. 99, No. 100, No. 101, No. 102, No. 103, No. 104, No. 105, No. 106, No. 107, No. 108, No. 109, No. 110, No. 111, No. 112, No. 113, No. 114, No. 115, No. 116, No. 117, No. 118, No. 119, No. 120, 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No. 1008, No. 1009, No. 1010, No. 1011, No. 1012, No. 1013, No. 1014, No. 1015, No. 1016, No. 1017, No. 1018, No. 1019, No. 1020, No. 1021, No. 1022, No. 1023, No. 1024, No. 1025, No. 1

